cinema canada

#36

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Filming in Alberta

Variety

6th Annual ... Film And Entertainment ... view

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NEW QUEBEC GOVT. BUOYS PIC HOPES

GLAD 'DO-LITTLE' HARDY IS OUT

By JEAN PIERRE TADROS

Montreal, Nov. 23.

The Parti Quebecois, the separatist party won the provincial elections on Nov. 15 and will form a new government next Friday. The film trade here is still unsure about the consequences. More immediately it is torn between (1) a feeling of relief at the removal of Denis Hardy, ...

Boston Bicent. Tourist Boom Just A Mirage

Boston, Nov. 23.

That the bicentennial here was a bust is pretty well known, but now it's official. State officials, closing ... birthday ...

French Talent Unions' Strike ... TV

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March 1977
Number 36

TORONTO FILM SOCIETY
MAY 3 1977

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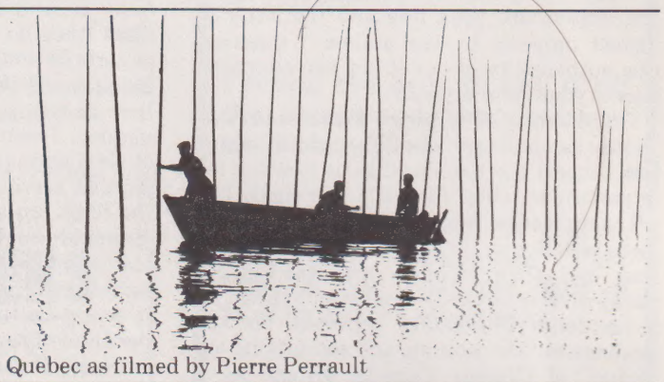

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REVERB

Malpractice Leads to Ripoffs

Please let me commend and congratulate you on your valiant efforts in producing **Cinema Canada.** I know you have an extremely difficult time. Courage and all good wishes.

You have willingly opened up the pages of our magazine to voices from all quarters of the film industry. One responsibility of the editor in printing letters is to know that the writers are bona fide and the letter is signed properly by the author. I question the authenticity of one if not two contributors to your February issue.

The identity of Slipshaw Farrenhold is so lightly camouflaged; the glib comments cannot conceal the likelihood he is fronting for a particular lobby (and it's not ours). Let all your readers know that the CCFM has been effective to the point that the distributors and their minions are resorting to many diverse tactics to demean our cause.

Randolph Cheveldave expresses his annoyance at "the whining and self-pitying attitude" of **Cinema Canada** writers. As a worker in film and as a member of the CCFM, let me say that just because here in Canada we are *finally* insisting on fair treatment doesn't mean we are after special favors. Our aim is to correct the malpractices of the past. The reason we've been subject to ripoffs over the years is because we weren't politically minded; we weren't organized and we didn't have a consensus.

There is no question that we have to devote our energies to the positive side of filmmaking; in Canada and in film you have to do that to survive, let alone succeed.

Kenneth Post, CSC

In Defense of a National Resource

Ron Blumer raises some interesting points in his critique of the NFB's distribution practices. What I don't understand, however, is why he limits his complaints to the NFB. As someone who books anywhere from three to 10 16mm rental prints per week, I would, in fact, rate the NFB fairly high on its distribution network. They have, by and large, supplied prints in reasonably good condition, often in less than the official notice time. They do inspect their prints. You can usually find someone in the office who has seen the film and who can, in a pinch, arrange replacements. Prescreenings are possible with little or no hassle. And, considering the number of films in it, the catalogue is, compared to commercial catalogues, more than reasonably informative about individual titles. On the other hand, the majority of those "highly motivated" commercial operations have regularly stuck this exhibitor with last-minute cancellations, unprojectable, unviewable prints, misleading information, and, worst of all, a continuously shrinking list of classics.

This is not to say that the NFB's distribution system cannot be improved or that the EFLA-style evaluations Ron calls for are not a good idea. In the latter case, however, I don't think it is the NFB's responsibility to provide "objective" reviews of its films (they do, by the way, provide reviews of sorts in *Potpourri,* their free magazine). Being an atheist, I would be reluctant to believe in any government agency's self-evaluations. I would rather see regular reviews of NFB and other non-narrative films in the journals serving the constituencies at which the films are aimed. Using Ron's example, it would be far more useful for history teachers to write about history films in an established history teacher's journal than it would be to introduce yet another compendium of reviews that may or may not be relevant. Perhaps it should be up to those of us in cinema criticism to suggest formats for film reviews in these professional journals. In the long run, however, the people who will end up using these films are the best source of criticism. We should, of course, continue writing on and looking at those non-narrative works from the NFB and its commercial counterparts. They are not only, as Ron points out, a national resource, but are also essential in any formulation of a definition of Canada's unique contribution to the medium.

S.R. Feldman
Assistant Professor
Department of English
University of Western Ontario

Britain Disturbs

The following letter was addressed, belatedly, to John Hofsess in response to his article in issue no. 31.

Sir,

I agree with your assessment of conditions that have prevented your achieving success in your field in Canada: Canadians are enormously puritan and hypocritical almost beyond belief.

However, being a Canadian citizen for some 33 years who came here from England, I doubt that Mr. Hofsess will enjoy life in Britain. Because while the permissive and sophisticated environment, encouraging to the development of one's artistic endeavours, is immense in its fertility, stimulation and recognition in Britain, the individual liberty and commercial environment, as allowed by the state, is quite disturbing.

The presence of a snobbish class distinction capped by a holdover from medieval times, a monarchy, together with complete and absolute apartheid of, and non-communication between, labor and management, make an atmosphere in which I could not enjoy life, and I imagine that Mr. Hofsess, being a writer and not a piece of flotsam, could not either.

The British school system, like that of BC, seems to have failed to impart any understanding to its young, in that the only truly admirable, literate and educated inhabitants of London seem to be the Negro immigrants from Africa and other parts of the Empire.

May I suggest that Mr. Hofsess retain his Canadianism but develop his art where he can and "nibble" a change within Canada rather than employ shock tactics.

We all have to be realists eventually.

D.O. Cox

P.S.

Why is it that in general only the NFB documentaries, together with those features that have a special appeal, excel?

How many efforts can we recall that were either burdened with parochialism or sticky-goo motherhood or just plain 'message'?

For international consumption, an understanding of international mores, even an appreciation, must prevail.

A depiction of the history of Canada, east and west, need not be as educational and historical as has sometimes been recorded.

Postal Woes

We have phoned the Post Office regularly, in efforts to get better mail service. Many subscribers complain about the time it takes to receive ***Cinema Canada.*** *Finally, in desperation, we wrote last November, and received the following response. Ed.*

This refers to your letter of November 8, 1976, addressed to:

Mr. Rolf Bischoff
Marketing Manager

concerning the late delivery of the October issue of your magazine, to your subscribers.

Despite all possible enquiries, it has not been possible to determine the exact reason for such a delay. Therefore, much of the difficulty we are having in providing prompt

and consistent postal service arises from the inadequacy of postal operating premises in Montreal and Canada's major cities.

To overcome this situation, we have an extensive building and mechanization program over the next several years. As you are probably aware, a new Metropolitan Sortation Center (Langelier), where newspapers and parcels are processed, was inaugurated on October 4, 1976.

Therefore, we have encountered problems during the first few weeks this center was in operation, due to adaptation of the employees to new equipment and schedules, plus a tremendous backlog of mail. When this plant is fully operational, we expect it will contribute importantly to improving service, and consequently avoid undue delays.

I am sorry that you have had this problem and express regrets for the inconvenience and annoyance caused, and should you need any further information on mail preparation, one of our marketing representatives will be of assistance.

Yours truly,
J.P. Rousseau
Canada Post

As our readers can see, our troubles will be over, happily, in "several years." While you're waiting, ***Cinema Canada*** *offers a special First Class Subscription (see below) and thanks you all for your patience.*

Erratum
In the ACTRA-CBC article in issue no. 34/35, Maggie Smith's husband was erroneously referred to as Beverly Nichols. This should have read Beverly Cross. Also, in Film News, the name of the new Director of Advertising for Odeon Theatres should have read Mr. C. Glenn Lettau.

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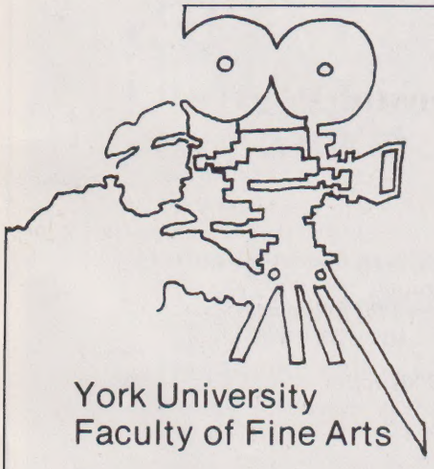

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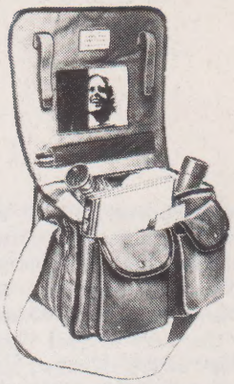

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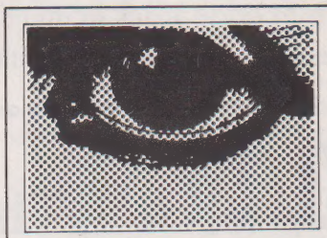

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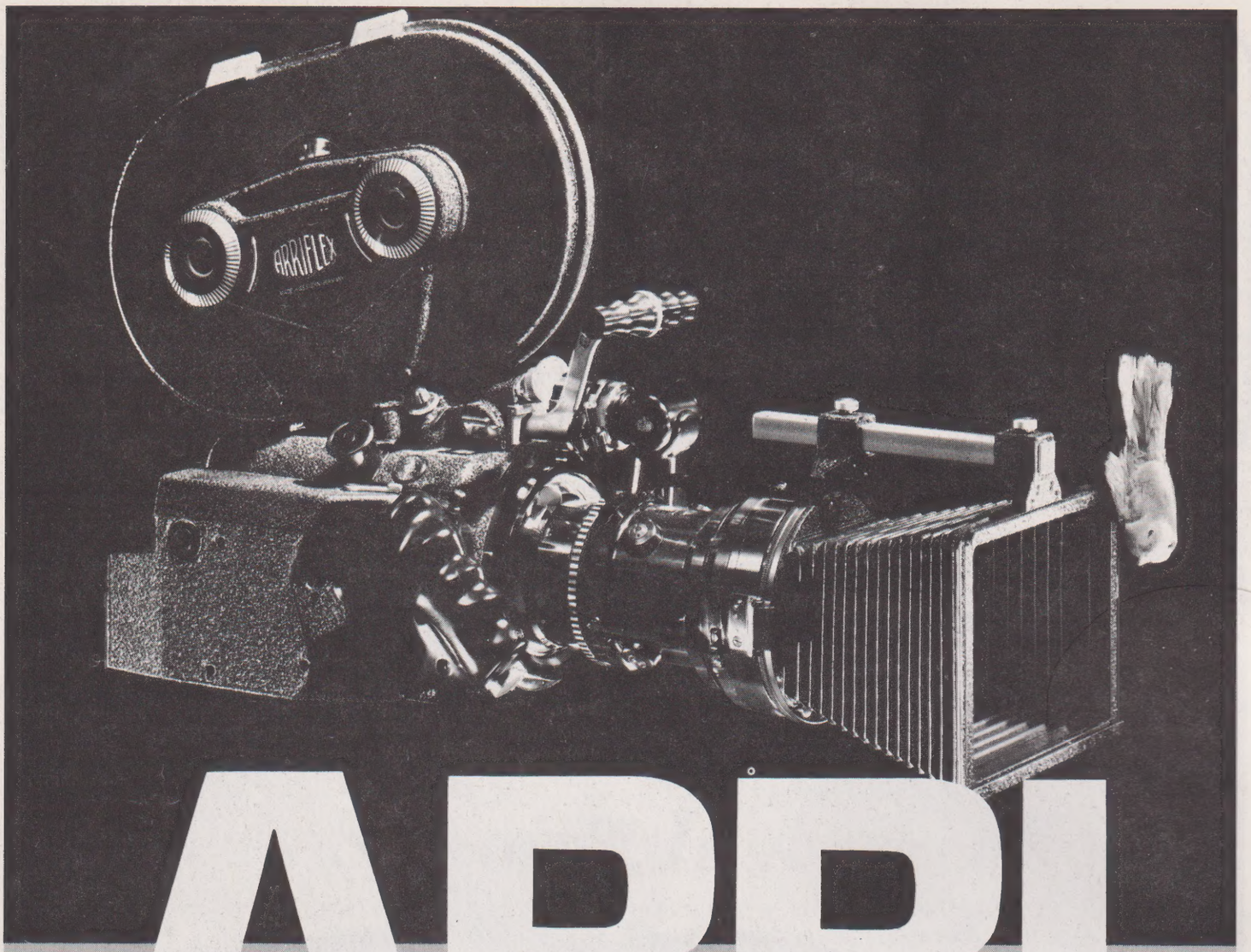

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The CMPDA?

"I was tough on them."

– John Roberts

THE ILLUSTRATED NEWS

THE WEATHER

Thawing slowly

Vol. 1, no. 4

John Roberts explaining policy in Montreal

photo: Alain Renaud

Federal Policy in Three Months

Mr. John Roberts, Secretary of State, declared in an interview with Jean-Pierre Tadros and Michel Roy of *Le Devoir* in early March that time was getting short and that he would formulate a new cinema policy within the next few months.

Roberts stated that Hugh Faulkner had left him, as heritage, a project for legislation which would simply have required Roberts' signature. The new Secretary of State felt, however, that he could not defend that legislation without becoming better acquainted with the cinema dossier. Now that he has begun his study, Roberts has become convinced that the draft film policy failed to deal with a most important aspect of the situation: film distribution in Canada.

Roberts has met with the members of the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors' Association. "I was a little tough on them when I met them, but they must understand that we don't have much time left, that the file has been around a long time and that we must make decisions now," he commented. "For those who have spent a lifetime in the industry and who have invested in it, that's difficult," he continued.

According to Roberts, the solution which the CMPDA proposes is simply to import the American method to Canada. The American majors are ready to help create a film industry here – ready with their money and their expertise – if only the Canadians will accept such a solution. The CMPDA

is convinced, says Roberts, "that Canadian films can't make money and that we can't force people to go and see them." The solution would be to continue to produce films like **Network** and others which are geared to the international market.

Roberts made it clear that, over the years, the difficulty which the Canadian Film Development Corp. has confronted was lack of direction; should we be making commercial films or aim for a product which would be culturally important? The CFDC is consequently in a 'damned if you do; damned if you don't' situation. Although the solution of the CMPDA makes sense, according to Roberts, if one looks only at the commercial side of the question, the Secretary of State wants to know how the CMPDA's interest in the commercial success of films made in Canada can be made to coincide with his cultural interest in those same films.

Mr. Roberts revealed that, to find the answer to this question, he is ready to accept one suggestion made at the CMPDA meeting: to meet with Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America and of the Motion Picture Export Association of America. He commented that it is difficult for a government to justify an investment of millions of dollars each year in the same film industry from which the Americans draw out $30 million a year through the distribution of their films.

Roberts made it clear that he faces heavy opposition within cabinet from disenchanted ministers. It had been thought that the CFDC would become self-financing after the initial investment made by the federal government. Today, however, the Corporation has recuperated only 17% of the $21 million it has invested in film production to date. "Most of my colleagues in the cabinet think that Canada simply doesn't have the economic infrastructure to support a film industry. This is why we must make decisions quickly. And right or wrong, we're going to make those decisions," concluded Mr. Roberts.

Connie Tadros

Montreal Fest

The World Film Festival of Canada will take place in Montreal this summer, from August 19 to 28. Headed by Serge Losique, director of the Conservatoire de l'art cinématographique at Concordia University, the festival hopes to encourage interchanges among film professionals and to stimulate the development of the cinema industry.

One can't help but draw parallels between this festival and the Festival of Festivals, held in Toronto last October. Both festivals are non-competitive, and propose a combination of international features, shorts and special programs, along with a film market, geared to attracting the industry. The accent is on "firsts' for Canadian audiences, and there is a sprinkling of Canadian content as well. Losique's projected budget ($300,000) is, however, far less than the $500,000 that Bill Marshall was reported to have spent for the Festival of Festivals.

The World Film Festival hopes to catch the Cannes run-off: to show those films that were not quite ready for Cannes in May but which will be completed by August. Losique is counting on the help of Maurice Bessy, director of the Cannes festival, in selecting these films. In all about 20 features and 20 shorts are scheduled for the central event.

Side events are also in the works: Canada 1977 will show recent Canadian productions, and retrospectives on Fellini and other filmmakers are being planned. There will be an evening honoring Japan, complete with the screening of recent Japanese films, and another tribute, this time to Lawrence Olivier. Other projects have as their themes Great Canadians in Hollywood and screenings of Independent Filmmakers.

Losique reports that he has had a favorable reception from the Festivals Bureau in Ottawa, and that Michael Spencer will help with the selection of Canadian films.

Quebec's Semaine Is Authentic

La Semaine de Cinéma Québécois – a screening of some of Quebec's most important and most authentic recent productions – will run in Montreal from March 29 to April 2, moving to Rimouski for viewing from April 11 to April 17.

In general, films shown at the Semaine are films which have not found their way onto commercial screens. In many cases, the films are documentaries and most film distributors are reticent to 'try' such films on audiences which are used to Hollywood fare. Nevertheless, the directors represented are among Quebec's finest, and film enthusiasts have awaited the screenings eagerly.

Pierre Perrault is back, after almost three years' absence, with **Un royaume vous attend** and **Le retour à la terre.** Both films were co-directed by Bernard Gosselin. Michel Brault and André Gladu will screen four episodes of their series, **Le son des Français d'Amérique,** and Arthur Lamothe will show the eighth episode of his series **Carcajou ou le péril blanc.** The episode, **Le passage des tentes aux maisons,** chronicles the government's intervention in forcing the Indians of the northeast coast to move from their tents into housing, thereby destroying the nomadic culture which they had until then kept alive. This film has been at the center of Quebec's most recent controversy, since Radio-Canada, which commissioned the series, refused to exercise its "option to buy" the film and thus denied it room on the TV screen.

Cap d'espoir by Jacques Leduc and **24 heures ou plus** by Gilles Groulx will both be shown. These films were made at the National Film Board and were suppressed – refused distribution – for years. Groulx's film explores the thesis that Quebec cannot survive within Confederation and its suppression was clearly political.

The NFB will also be present with other recent films: **Raison d'être** by Yves Dion (if a black and white print can be readied in time), **Famille et variations** by Mireille Dansereau and **L'interdit** by Pierre Maheu.

Of the 20-odd features to be shown, only seven are fictional works. Of these, **M'en revenant de par les épinettes** by François Brault will be seen for the first time. The selections, so heavy in documentaries, reflect the movement in cinéma québécois back to the documentary form. In addition to the features, over 50 shorts will be screened.

The Direction générale du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel will use the Semaine to release **Mesdames et messieurs la fête,** the documentary by Aimée Danis on the cultural attractions surrounding the Olympic last year.

Just how important this week is for those interested in filming in Quebec is reflected by the people who are scheduled to address the audiences. Louis O'Neill, Quebec's Minister of Culture and Communications, will use the occasion to talk about the province's film policy, and Michel Brulé, director of the DGCA, will also speak one evening. Many of the filmmakers will be available: Pierre Perrault, Bernard Gosselin, Michel Brault, François Brault and Mireille Dansereau, among others. Rock Demers will talk about the activities of the Institut québécois du cinéma and François Macerola will represent the NFB.

The week of screenings was organized by Carl Mailhot, Claude Cartier, Daniel Vincellette and André Lachapelle with the help of the Canada Council and the DGCA ($10,000 each).

Institut Complete

The seat left vacant by Michel Brulé when he left the Institut québécois du cinéma to move on to the Direction générale du cinéma has now been filled. Mr. Souci Gagné, a sociologist who has been interested in filming in Quebec and has worked with Arthur Lamothe, has been named the seventh and last member of the Institut.

According to the Institut's timetable, the members were to establish their priorities and policies before looking for a director. The nomination of Yvon Desrochers as director of the Institut leads one to believe that work is going ahead full steam. Desrochers was in charge of the cultural program for the Comité Organisateur des Jeux Olympiques.

The Illustrated News Productions in the Works

Why Shoot the Teacher?, the CTV-Fil Fraser feature made in Alberta last year, was supposed to have had its premiere at a special weekend gathering of the province's industry association in February, but editing problems meant postponement to the spring. The gathering was an editing seminar.

Meanwhile Fraser is preparing a production of **Back to Beulah,** the play by W.O. Mitchell that was so well received by Edmonton and Toronto audiences. Production is hoped for this spring, when **Teacher** is released.

Publisher into features

Harlequin Romances are probably the most popular books in the world. The Toronto publisher, half-owned by the *Toronto Star* newspaper, has 2,000 titles for which it has rights, and publishes 12 new ones every month. Readership devotion makes feature filmmaking a natural follow-up, and principal photography has now been completed on their first effort, **Leopard in the Snow.**

Filming was done near Collingwood, Ontario, during February, and in England. The production is an Anglo-Canadian co-production, but without CFDC participation because both director and writer are British. Budget is one million dollars.

Director is Gerry O'Hara; writer is Anne Mather, who also wrote the novel; producers are John Quested of Britain and Gil Taylor of Toronto. Stars are Keir Dullea, Susan Penhaligon, and Jeremy Kemp.

The story is about a woman stranded in a snowstorm who is rescued by a mysterious man with a leopard. The paperback sold one million copies.

Herberman busy

Len Herberman, general manager of Ambassador Film Distributors, is becoming more involved in feature production, usually as executive producer in co-production efforts. Three projects are currently in process.

Herberman will be executive producer on **Sherlock Holmes and Saucy Jack,** a $4 million co-production set for August filming in London. Plot concerns Holmes' investigation of the Jack the Ripper killings, involving major figures, even the royal family. Bob Clark will direct for Highlight Film Productions of Canada and Sands Films Limited of the UK.

Also in planning stages are two other features. Clark and Herberman have bought the rights to remake **The Cat People,** first done by Val Lewton in the '40s. And Ted Kotcheff may direct a film based on the Phantom cartoon character in late summer.

Greenberg announces two projects

Harold Greenberg's Montreal-based Astral Films plans two Italian co-productions, and may get involved in a third.

Harold Greenberg

Italy's Titanus Films will make two features with Astral-Bellevue Pathe, a western and a caper comedy. **Jim Dawn** will be filmed in Alberta; the comedy is called **You're Never Too Old.** Each will be budgeted at two million dollars.

A third possibility is the latest Vittorio Gassman feature, to be shot in Italy. Greenberg may participate financially, making it a co-production. He wants to replace lead Anouk Aimee with Genevieve Bujold to satisfy the co-production provisions.

Wieland-Steed plan Laurence's *Diviners*

The team of Judy Steed and Joyce Wieland have obtained the rights and commissioned a screenplay for Margaret Laurence's best-seller *The Diviners.* The feature, budgeted at $1.2 million, will be shot in late summer if the money can be raised. Charles Pachter, a Toronto artist, has joined the producing entity, which last year made **The Far Shore.**

Steed is to direct this effort, and the screenplay will be by Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson. Shooting will take place in Toronto, Manitoba and Scotland.

Nielsen-Ferns

Toronto-based Nielsen-Ferns is planning a feature for theatres and a TV series based on the life of naturalist Grey Owl, and plans to approach Marlon Brando to play the lead.

Brando is currently hoping to produce a series on Indians for television, and was scheduled to meet Nielsen-Ferns about producing some episodes for him. They were to talk about the Grey Owl project at the time.

Other efforts

Murray Markowitz, Tony Kramreither and Ambassador Films are discussing a feature based on the celebrated Christine Demeter murder case, which made headlines in Ontario two years ago.

The Glick brothers, of Hal Roach Studios in Toronto, are supervising post-production on Ed Hunt's **Alien Encounter.** Currently in script stage is **King of White Lady,** based on the best-seller by Lance Hill. Hill is writing the script with American director Ted Post. Another sci-fi epic is also in planning stages.

Allan Eastman, currently in LA, reports that **A Sweeter Song** is about to go into general US release, and is working on several feature scripts, one with playwright Larry Fineberg.

Fineberg's treatment of the best-seller *The Book of Eve,* presented at Stratford last year as a play, will probably go to Broadway. But a feature film based on the book won't be done by any of that group. Rights are held by Maxine Samuels, Pierre Berton and Elsa Franklin, and they supposedly don't like Fineberg's treatment. They do plan to produce the feature this year if possible.

David French is working on a feature script based on his successful play *One Crack Out.*

The Disappearance, shooting in Montreal in January, moved to England for completion of principal photography.

TV productions host filmmakers

At the CBC, Don Shebib is currently directing a 90-minute film called **The Fighting Men.** Producer is John Trent, and neither has been seen around the Corporation for some time.

And appearing in George Bloomfield's tape effort of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* is expatriate Susan Clark.

Stephen Chesley

Alien Encounter

Vancouver News

The hot rumor in town for the last several weeks is the Italian-Canadian co-production **Nightful of Rain** to be directed by Lina Wertmuller. This film has already started shooting in Italy and would use BC for 4 to 6 weeks of location shooting. Bob Gray has been working for the company since before Christmas, though there is still no definite green light.

Bob Linnell has returned from a feature in Toronto followed by a two-month European vacation. He is currently putting his energies to work for BCFIA but is waiting to start a new feature. (Aren't we all?)

Commercial production continues to feed us while we wait for the features scene to improve. Production house Take One has been a major contributor in that market, and has now expanded to shooting all over the country.

Local adperson Stephen De Gange is about to move to New York, just as we were getting used to having him. He has been responsible for bringing the freelance market into his agency (J. Walter Thompson), a situation that has long been sought.

It is rumored that Kirk Tougas has a feature in preparation.

Tom Drake has just returned from Los Angeles where he was writing a television series. Tom is one of the hottest writers on the West Coast. He has for his own perverse reasons decided to live in Canada (he is Canadian), where of course he is ignored except by the people in Hollywood who continue to court him.

Director Gene Beck is now living in Vancouver and will work the Los Angeles, Vancouver, Toronto triangle.

Kathleen Payne has returned to Vancouver from Toronto where she was (of course) "discovered" and spent a very successful 18 months. Now that she is back in Vancouver where she has been living all her life this singer/actress is waiting to become the new overnight sensation.

Celebrity Revue, the syndicated TV talk/variety show, has folded after several months of taping in Vancouver. The show, which had a format of US and Canadian "names" sprinkled with new talent, lost its two most lucrative markets and wrapped. Hopefully producer Wendell Wilkes will come up with another one. It certainly was an ambitious project for Canada and we sure need more of those.

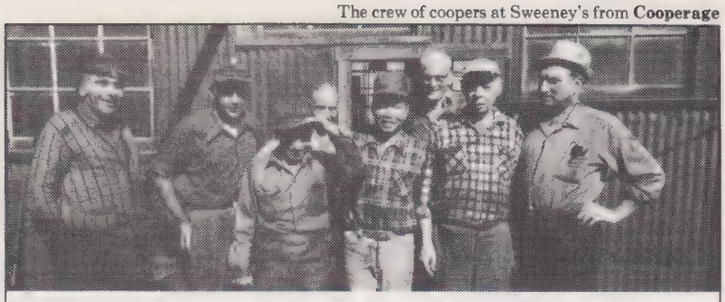
Daryl Duke remains closeted at his CKVU-TV and probably will remain there for at least the next few months before going back into features. His key local show *Vancouver* remains the only local television show to treat Vancouver like the grown-up cosmopolitan city it is, with continual surprises about our city. This is what community television ought to be about but so seldom is.

Peter Bryant's **The Supreme Kid** opened in Vancouver February 4. By the next issue we will have a report on audience and box office reaction to this Canadian feature which has had more than its share of problems getting before the public.

Fiona Jackson

Kathleen Payne

The crew of coopers at Sweeney's from **Cooperage**



Marketing 'Cooperage'

Even before Phil Borsos won a Canadian Film Award in the theatrical short category he was confident that **Cooperage** would play well in theatres and give him a return.

To begin with, Borsos went out on a limb to make the film. His previous experience was limited to a three-minute short on a Cadillac sale, called **Cadillac,** but from there, through determination and persistence, he went on to produce and direct a theatrical short that won an award for its category in Canada, and almost made the Oscar nomination list. (It was among the last 17 on the list, and was dropped when nominations for the final five films were made.)

The film cost $19,000. This includes the cost of production, two 16 mm prints, and two 35 mm prints. Borsos received a $5000 grant from the Canada Council, the regional office of the National Film Board supplied another $2,000 in stock and processing, and Borsos' company, Rocky Mountain Films, paid the balance.

In marketing the film, Borsos set out to prove its worth by entering the film in various festivals. With the cooperation of the Festivals Bureau the film went to London, Lyons, Barcelona, the Virgin Islands, and Chicago. Borsos had read along with the rest of us the claims George Destounis was making about the lack of short subjects available, and how Famous Players would be willing to finance interesting projects. However, Famous Players responded negatively when Borsos tested them out about showing the film.

He next tried Odeon, and with the support of the local Odeon office, the film was booked for 13 weeks in a BC theatre and another in Alberta. (The rate for a short starts at $75 per week, is later reduced to $60, and then to $20 per week.) Because he was guaranteed a fixed amount from the exhibitor, he decided to underwrite the blow-up costs to 35 mm so the film could be played theatrically.

Based on the trial run, and encouraged by the CFA prize, Borsos is projecting a total of six 35 mm prints playing across the country in both Odeon and Famous houses.

He also managed to recoup some money on a sale of the film to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It was purchased through the program purchasing department for $1750.

His third avenue in marketing, and probably the most significant, is in print sales. He made an exclusive agreement with Viking Films, and sold 20 prints in six months, with a projection of 100 prints being sold within three years. His return will be around $85 to $100 per print.

He then traveled south, visiting distributors from Seattle to Los Angeles. He found a Seattle-based distributor to handle the film's US distribution. He would like to find a New York-based distributor for the education and library market.

His objective in marketing the film (which is an ongoing process) is to continue as a filmmaker from a sound economic base. He has sold all rights to the film, and is currently producing another film on "high-rigging" from the point of view of the high-rigger. His energy and enterprise has made him a number of well-wishers and believers in Vancouver—people he's convinced that, with persistence and courage, "it can be done" independently.

Peter Bryant

The Illustrated News Festivals

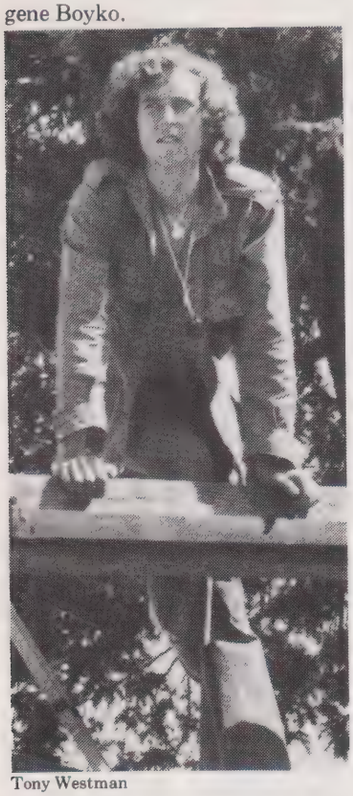
First prize in LA

Ottawa – Canada's Capital produced by Crawley Films won first prize at the recent International Travel Film Festival in Los Angeles. It has been televised some 300 times to an audience total of 10 million, reports Crawley. The short is now being shown to theatre audiences too, in the US and Canada.

Pacific Cinematheque

During the month of February Vancouver-based Pacific Cinematheque featured an evening of NFB Vancouver films and welcomed Ontario filmmaker Chris Chapman for a film showing and discussion.

New BC films from the NFB included **Egypt** by Al Razutis, **Salmon People** by Tony Westman, **Augusta** by Anne Wheeler, **No Big Money** by Doug White, and **The Veterinarians** by Eugene Boyko.



Tony Westman

Also included during the month's activities were two Canadian efforts that formed part of a Buddhist Cinema series. **The Fate of Tibet** was written by George Woodcock, Canada's most prolific cultural writer, and Byron Black had a hand in the filming. Black's own film, **Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum,** was also included; subtitle of the latter is "Filling Space to Benefit Beings."

Canadian films off to fests

Three Canadian films have been invited to foreign festivals.

The Paris International Festival of Science Fiction and Fantastic Films, held March 12-22, plays host to David Cronenberg's **Rabid** and Peter Sasdy's **Welcome to Blood City.**

The CTV-Fil Fraser feature **Why Shoot the Teacher?** has been invited to the Los Angeles Filmex from March 9 to 27.

Travel film award competition announced

The Travel Industry Association of Canada is looking for entries for its annual awards presentation to be held in Edmonton in May.

Films examining a locality in Canada are eligible, and don't need to be travel promotion specifically. Two prizes will be awarded, The Maple Leaf Award for first and the Canuck Award for second place.

Write the Association at Suite 1016, 130 Albert Street, Ottawa K1P 5G4.

CFI's Kelly O'Brien off to Finland

Kelly O'Brien of the Canadian Film Institute travelled to Finland in February to act as a juror for the international festival in Tampere.

She worked on the recent Ottawa 76 Animation Festival and had completed assembling a program of Canadian animation to be shown at Tampere when she was invited to participate in person.

NFB gains Oscar nominations

Three NFB efforts were nominated for this year's Academy awards held in Los Angeles at the end of March.

The Board has won 40 Oscars in the past, but this year marks the first time that three different categories in a single year include NFB efforts.

In the animated shorts category is **The Street** by Caroline Leaf. **Volcano,** by Donald Brittain, John Kramer and R.A. Duncan, is in the feature documentary category. **Blackwood,** by Tony Ianzelo and Andy Thompson, is in the documentary short category.

Stephen Chesley

Swaybill and Clark

Remember **Breaking Point**? Roger Swaybill wrote it, Bob Clark directed it and neither one of them is satisfied with the finished product.

Swaybill says that Clark did the best job possible with the material he had to work with but that material wasn't the original script he wrote.

According to Swaybill, Twentieth Century-Fox forced a rewrite of **Breaking Point** that neither he nor Clark wanted to do. He says the action stayed in the picture at the expense of cutting the film's characterizations.

On top of this, Fox took the final 110-minute version that he and Clark delivered and trimmed it down to 93 minutes.

Nevertheless, Swaybill says, **Breaking Point** will break even on its international release – but reach nowhere near the return of Clark's earlier film **Black Christmas.**

He also says that when **Breaking Point** and **Shoot** were released in the United States there was a conscious effort by the trade papers to debunk them because they were Canadian-made.

What does he think of working in Canada? He says there are a lot fewer hassles than working in the US and it is, of course, much cheaper. The problem is that there isn't enough competent technical talent to go round.

"If you get two or three films shooting in Ontario, you're all right. But if you try to get a fourth film on, there just aren't enough technical people."

Swaybill will work again with Bob Clark this summer when Clark directs his new original screenplay, **The Bartender.** But that one won't be shot in Canada.

Bob Clark

Sherlock Holmes, Jack the Ripper, Bob Clark and the Canadian Film Development Corporation are getting together this summer to make **Sherlock Holmes and Saucy Jack.**

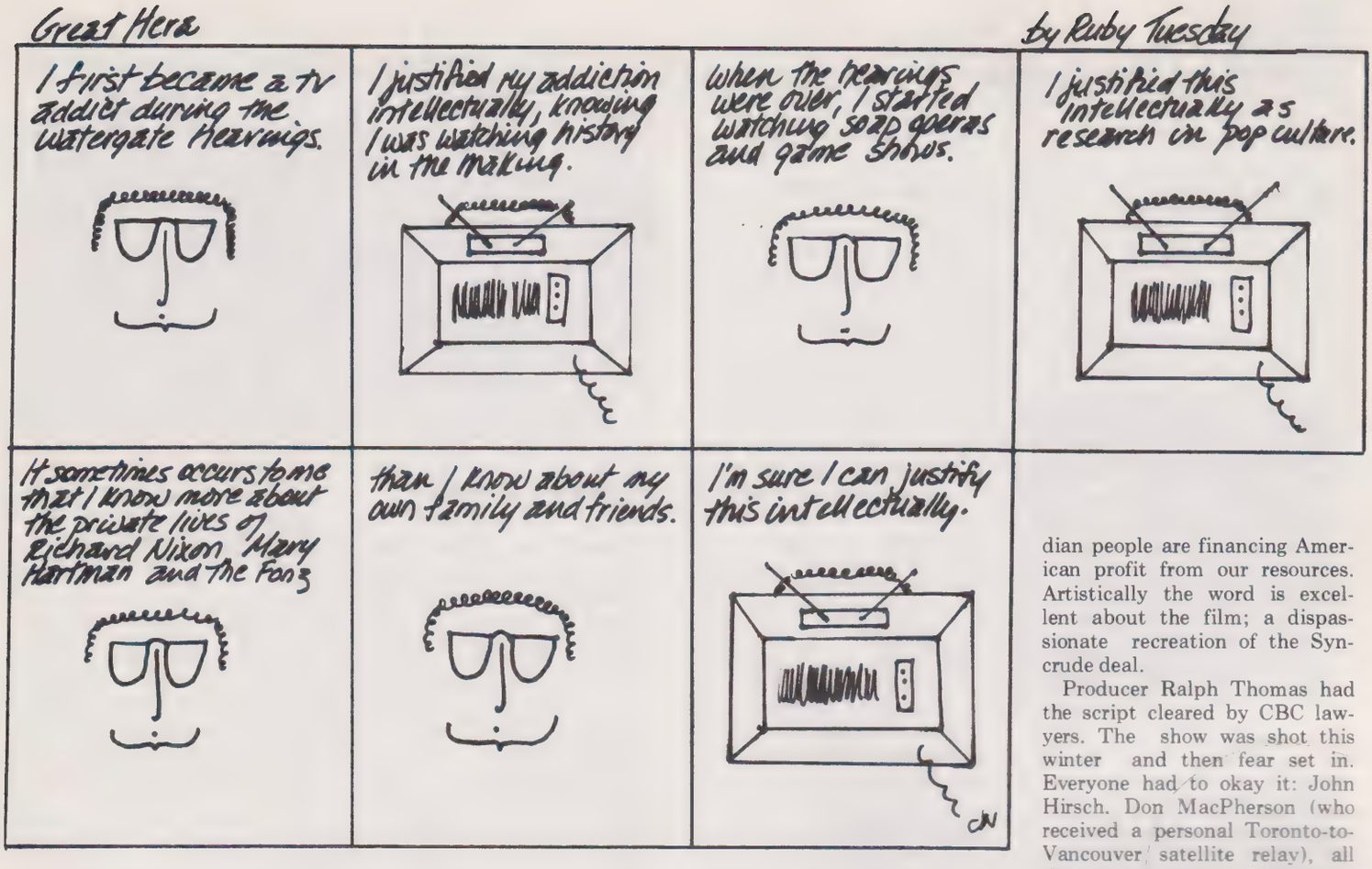
The CFDC and Ambassador Films are partially financing the film which puts Sherlock Holmes hot on the tracks of the Ripper as he terrorizes London in 1888.

Clark started his film career with a $70,000 horror film entitled **Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things.** Then he graduated to a larger budget for **Dead of Night.** Then came his **Black Christmas** and his most recent film **Breaking Point.**

Before starting **Sherlock Holmes and Saucy Jack,** Clark hopes to direct an original screenplay by Roger Swaybill (**Breaking Point**) entitled **The Bartender.**

John Wolotko

Blackwood produced by the NFB


Great Hera
by Ruby Tuesday
I first became a TV addict during the watergate hearings.
I justified my addiction intellectually, knowing I was watching history in the making.
When the hearings were over, I started watching soap operas and game shows.
I justified this intellectually as research in pop culture.
It sometimes occurs to me that I know more about the private lives of Richard Nixon, Mary Hartman and the Fonz
than I know about my own family and friends.
I'm sure I can justify this intellectually.
CN

ACTRA Upset

In what can only be called a bizarre incident, ACTRA and the CBC clashed again in February over the importation of foreign talent.

The Variety Department had scheduled a '50s rock special starring David Clayton Thomas and Blood, Sweat and Tears. Also on the program were Chubby Checker, Chaka Kahn, Robert Klein, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and Carl Perkins.

ACTRA said no to the first three: Checker, Kahn and Klein, and threatened to withdraw others from the production. CBC and ACTRA agreed on permitting Checker and Kahn in, but not Klein.

Why not prevent the latter three (Berry, Diddley, Perkins) too? Because they are members of the American Federation of Musicians, and ACTRA has no jurisdiction over their participation – the AF of M never prevents foreign acts from appearing. So the spectacle of ACTRA trying to stop a production which couldn't be stopped, because they had only partial effect on it anyway, got some publicity for a few days.

Writers' Branch

The Toronto Writers' Branch is a new entity in the national scheme of ACTRA organization.

A petition of 100 writers asked for the separation in Toronto, and it takes effect April 1. It's the eleventh branch of the actors' and writers' union. Members can do anything under ACTRA jurisdiction no matter what profession they list as primary, a situation that has already existed.

Members who are primarily writers will be asked to choose whether they want to join the Writers' Branch or remain in the regular Toronto Branch.

Stephen Chesley

Off the Record

CBC officialdom runs scared again

Following a tradition going back for decades, the CBC is currently holding up the broadcast of a TV drama because it is afraid of unnamed consequences.

Program in question is **The Tar Sands,** a one-hour film by Peter Pearson about the Syncrude project in Alberta. It was to have been the final program in the CBC's journalism-type series, *For the Record,* and was to be broadcast in late February.

Pearson based his script on the book by the same name by Larry Pratt, and shot it using a combination of real names, like Lougheed, and fictional smaller characters. The story told how, once again, the Canadian people are financing American profit from our resources. Artistically the word is excellent about the film; a dispassionate recreation of the Syncrude deal.

Producer Ralph Thomas had the script cleared by CBC lawyers. The show was shot this winter and then fear set in. Everyone had to okay it: John Hirsch. Don MacPherson (who received a personal Toronto-to-Vancouver satellite relay), all the way up to prez Al Johnson.

Until Johnson everyone said okay, show it. It now rests, humbly, at the feet of Johnson. What he'll do with it no one knows, but in any case it won't be seen until May at the earliest.

Ralph Thomas

No reason has been given for the postponement, except to say that they want to be sure that the 'public knows what is real and what is fiction.'

Stephen Chesley

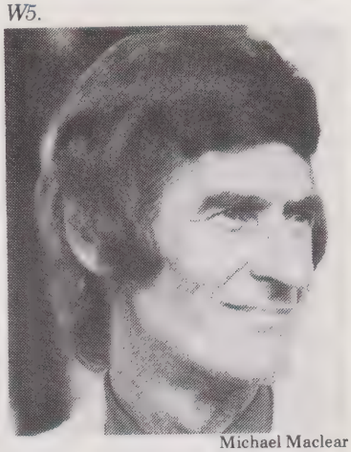
The Illustrated News Notes Random Notes Random

APPOINTMENTS

Marcel Deschamps has joined the staff of CBC Vice-President **Peter Herndorff** as a Vice-President of Planning. Deschamps was formerly General Manager of ORTO, the Olympic communications body. He will also negotiate broadcast rights for the Corporation for major events.

Marcel Deschamps

Michael Maclear has been appointed Executive Producer of Current Affairs for CTV. Maclear currently hosts his own half-hour show, which will be dropped to allow his move into administration. The appointment signals a revamping of CTV's current affairs shows, including *W5*.


Michael Maclear

People doings

Nick Mancuso, a Toronto actor who appeared on local stage and in several CBC dramas, landed a six-month contract with ABC in New York. Little happened until last month, when the network tapped him to star in a TV pilot feature about an international private detective.

The biggest success in TV history, *Roots*, had Canadian content. Four writers were used on the series, and one was M. Charles Cohen, veteran Canadian contributor to the CBC and elsewhere, who lives in Montreal.

An Evening with Diana Ross, to be seen on CTV March 1, is a 90-minute special starring one of the hottest acts in showbiz. Called upon to direct it was Norman Campbell, a veteran CBC contributor who constantly works in LA and New York for Norman Lear and every other major show, but who seems to contribute little to the CBC except for ballet, opera and musical comedy specials. Why?

Another why is Harvey Hart, who recently directed three pilots for American TV and who lives in Toronto. Yet he only makes features in Canada, never television shows.

Beverly D'Angelo, Canadian stage actress who has little exposure on TV here, landed a prime role in Paramount's **First Love,** a feature to be shot in Seattle. Director is Joan Darling, a Norman Lear veteran responsible for many Mary Hartman shows.

Johnny Esaw

Johnny Esaw, CTV Vice-President of Sports, was named TV Broadcaster of the Year at the Sports Federation of Canada Media Awards Dinner, held in Toronto on January 28.

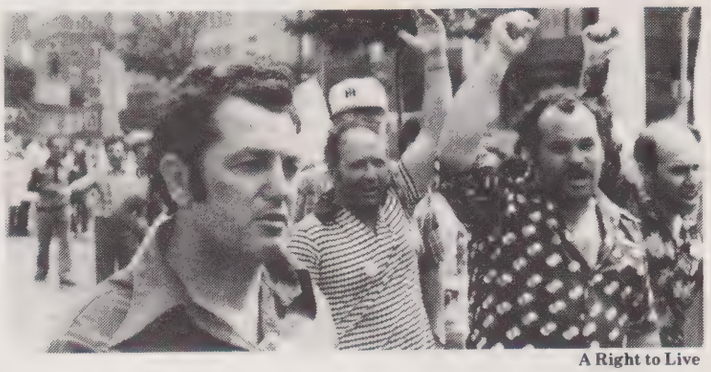
Esaw was cited for his support and promotion of skating across the country.

Johnny Esaw

BCFIA announces scholarship

The British Columbia Film Industry Association has collected $1000 to form the basis for a scholarship.

The Jack Gettles Memorial Scholarship will be given on a merit basis by The British Columbia Institute of Technology. First presentation will be this June.


A Right to Live

New Mackey film

Clarke Mackey's latest film, a short commissioned by the Union of Injured Workers, was shown at Toronto's Cinemalumiere Theatre in February.

The film is a strong condemnation of the Ontario government's attitude and actions toward workers injured on the job.

Advertising compilation

The Wonderful World of Advertising, Part II, has been scheduled for showing in several Canadian centres this spring. Part I played to kudos last year.

The 90-minute film is a collection of the best commercials shown at the 1976 International Advertising Film Festival at Cannes. Entries are from around the world.

It was shown in Montreal in February, and has been scheduled for Ottawa's Town Cinema on March 17, Toronto's New Yorker Cinema on March 22, and will then travel to Quebec City, Trois-Rivieres and Sherbrooke.

The 16mm print is available from Adfilms on Yonge Street in Toronto.

Stephen Chesley

IN AND OUT OF THE MOVIES

gerald pratley

Enough has been written about Festival of Festivals, much of it foolish in its misplaced admiration for such a ramshackle event; but one important aspect of the behavior of its promoter, William Marshall, remains unmentioned. It is his childish condemnation, joined by the anti-American faction of the film community, of American producers and distributors who refused to give him films.

This has been interpreted by him and by certain reporters as a sign of disdain for Canada on the part of the Americans, and the usual comments were trotted out about "colonization," and of our lucrative market being considered the back door of the USA. Once again, figures in the millions were used regarding the amount of rental money taken out of Canada, in return for which, the complainers argue, the festival received nothing.

Producers and distributors – whether they are American or Mongolian, for that matter – try to do what they think is best for their films when it comes time to release them to cinemas. In our deep interest in films, we may or may not agree with their decisions, but they have the right to make them. It is their investments which are at stake.

There is no rule or special understanding which says that producers of any country must submit to festivals films requested of them by promoters or directors. The producers will send them if they think it is in their interest to do so; if not, there is no other reason why they should. And American producers use this approach for festivals in their own country as well as those abroad.

Why should Mr. Marshall, then, think that he is being discriminated against? What makes him think that producers have a special obligation to him because his event is Canadian? American producers have refused films to festivals all over the world, many of them famous, including those held in the USA, when they felt that a festival showing would not be beneficial to their pictures.

Why should producers give films costing millions of dollars free of charge to a festival which is unknown to them, has not yet proved itself, and is run by people who have yet to establish their credibility? And why would any festival want to show the films Marshall asked for (**Bound for Glory,** among others)? It is not that they are unimportant, but they are not 'festival films,' and are assured of regular exhibition. They were wanted primarily for the greater commercial success of the festival.

Those who joined him in his anti-American comments failed to point out that one of Montreal's most successful festival evenings was the showing of Arthur Penn's **Bonnie and Clyde,** and that over the years the Stratford International Film Festival never had any real difficulties obtaining films it wanted from American companies. How, then, can they be criticized as being indifferent to Canada?

The fact is that Marshall did not give anyone much reason to trust his competence to run a major expensive film festival. His grandstanding aroused doubts as to the true nature of the event, which sounded more like a circus than an artistic manifestation.

Many of his claims were absurd, including the leading one in which he said he was working with other festival directors to obtain films which they show. Anyone who professes to know anything about festivals should be aware of the fact that no director has the authority to give to another festival a film submitted to his event. He does not even have the right to send films made by filmmakers in his own country. Only the producer can grant this permission – working, in some cases, on the advice of his distributor.

Another aspect to the event which is discouraging to people working in the cause of film appreciation is that among the many films so enthusiastically described by Natalie Edwards and other commentators, no less than 15 had already been shown by Canada's repertory cinemas, cinematheques, film theatres and the CFFS, and at the time of their showings, particularly in Toronto, they were ignored by the press which found them so praiseworthy when shown at the festival.

Why is it that some reviewers become ecstatic over showings which are part of a festival of some kind, but remain uninterested when the same films are accessible through regular means of exhibition? Snobbism, perhaps?

There is nothing wrong with the festival showing these films again. Not everyone could see them at their previous showings. But for the festival to make out that these were premieres was hardly being honest.

Furthermore, there are many observers who wonder about ethical considerations when *Saturday Night,* which has not previously shown interest in other Canadian film festivals, accompanies a large advertisement from the festival with a laudatory article before the event takes place; and of the propriety of our NFB in seconding its knowledgeable director of promotion to a festival which was frankly commercial in outlook and associated itself in "promotions" with commercial companies.

The final hypocrisy in all this is the behavior of Marshall as a leader of the Canadian film community. As the president of CAMPP, the Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers, he speaks up regularly against the exploitation of Canada by American film companies. He sincerely believes in his cause. He even came to the Canadian Film Awards meeting just before the Awards began and said he would resign on principle should the committee allow the CMPDA, the American-dominated distributing organization, to present its award on television.

Believing this, he should not then go to the same companies he is attacking and ask them to assist him with films for his festival. And even worse, when they refuse, turn around and attack them yet again. This is surely inconsistent with any ideals he and his association uphold.

A true "nationalist", it seems, would take pleasure in organizing his festival without asking for the participation of the major American companies, and making it so successful that, in time, they would come to him. After all, if we are so dominated by them, and they send us all their films in the regular course of exhibition, what could he want to show that will not be seen in the cinemas?

It is all childish *in extremis.* No wonder so many Americans look across the border and see only a nursery school.

the state of quebec

Quebec is at a crossroads, and the decisions – both federal and provincial – which will be made in the coming months are crucial. Taking stock of the situation of feature filming in the province, Jean-Pierre Tadros traces a sombre portrait.

by Jean-Pierre Tadros

The election of the Parti Québécois has created a sort of 'before and after' effect, a temptation to evaluate what had come before in order to better measure what is to come afterwards. One would like to look back and say that the state of cinema in Quebec on November 15 was strong and healthy, that the directors and producers, not to mention the technicians, were in good form. Alas! Nothing could be farther from the truth. To be fair, *le cinéma québécois* is still struggling along but its condition has become critical. The months ahead will tell whether the illness is terminal.

Before the elections, the milieu was quickly deteriorating. Production was at an all-time low. The relationships between the provincial government and the private sector were deplorable and the relationships within the industry weren't much better. The producers and unions were at each other's throats over working conditions. Strikes, lockouts and even injunctions were being used to hold the negotiations together. It was as if some suicidal game were being played; the victim was to be that sometimes pesky, often beautiful, usually invigorating and revealing phenomenon, *le cinéma québécois.*

Suddenly, the election brought a halt to the in-fighting. Here was perhaps the last chance to salvage Quebec's most visible art form. If ever cinema would flourish in the province, it would be now. The producers and the unions soon came to an agreement after nine months of conflict. The government cleaned house at the Direction générale du cinéma et de l'audio-visuel and appointed Michel Brulé, a competent film scholar and administrator, as director. It also cleared the way to the Institut québécois du cinéma by naming all seven members and calling a meeting. First aid has been given. It remains to be seen whether the government can and will take the proper steps to help the industry out of its economic and spiritual depression. Perhaps it is already too late.

For the last few years, there's been an uneasy feeling, the sense of something going wrong. The 'cinema' milieu reflected the malaise which ran through Quebec and which, finally, brought in the new government. Perhaps it should have been expected that a generation which was brought up during the 'quiet revolution' would have grown up thinking big. Too big! *La folie des grandeurs.* Quebec's cinema was to pay dearly for trying to embody those dreams.

Today it seems clear that during the period between Expo '67 and the 1976 Olympics, cinema in Quebec lived through a heady, crazy period. From a modest enterprise, it grew out of all proportion. Everything had become possible, even the impossible dream. It was a period during which the entire society participated in an affirmation of its identity. In some of its forms, this affirmation – aptly symbolized by the Olympics – bordered on disaster, on ruin. The films of this period, at least some of them, reflected this collective will. The mood was grandiose and so were the projects. Never mind that the undertakings were dangerous and perhaps foolish.

The Origins

In the beginning, in the '60s, cinema in Quebec was the simple and direct expression of the reality of that society. It was a cinema without frills. The *cinéma direct* of Michel Brault, Gilles Groulx, Claude Jutra and Jean-Pierre Lefebvre had made an enviable reputation for Quebec. And that might

A scene from **Le mépris n'aura qu'un temps** by Arthur Lamothe

Denis Héroux's **Valérie** was an allegory of Quebec filmmaking

have been enough. But no. It wasn't long before fiction began to beckon, and the directors followed, losing their heads and sometimes their souls.

How short memory is, and how removed the 1950s seemed. Back then, Quebec had the embryo of a feature film industry and saw that it couldn't be made to work. Once the Duplessis years were over, no one was willing to look back and to remember the lessons learned. Once again, the challenge of the fictional feature took over.

A Commercial Cinema

New filmmakers emerged. It was time again to prove that *le cinéma québécois* could also mean commercial cinema, time to win the place which the American films occupied on the screens of the province. Foolhardy and vaguely unaware, Denis Héroux made **Valérie** in 1969. The miracle had begun. It was a small film whose only redeeming virtue was to tell a simple story, full of overblown symbolism: one which everyone could read correctly and with which he could identify. A wave of recognition swept over the public. The image of this young girl, running away from the convent to the life of the big city, tempted by all the evils therein, undressing in front of the cameras as she turned to prostitution, was terrific. To hell with the old system. Then, finally, and importantly, she finds true love, gives up her sinful ways and lives happily ever after. If ever there was a story about having it both ways, **Valérie** was it.

What we didn't realize then was that Héroux, symbolically, was also tracing the route that *le cinéma québécois* was to take. Héroux gave birth to a cinema which wanted desperately to free itself from the hold of the National Film Board. Although literally all the filmmakers at work then had received their training at the Board, there was mutiny in the ranks. The golden days of French production were coming to an end. The problem was that as the filmmakers left the NFB they turned their backs on the documentary form as well. Both producers and directors formed companies and aimed for the big time, setting *le cinéma direct* – the pride of Quebec – aside.

Once in town, the filmmakers suffered temptations, not the least of which were the big American films on the screens everywhere. The example given by the home-town boys, Gilles Groulx, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Gilles Carle and Jacques Godbout, was one of quality and originality; they made films which were the antithesis of the American film. Certainly that wasn't the route to success. The solution became one of borrowing the American recipe and modifying it to suit the Québécois palate. So *le cinéma québécois* – or better, the cinema 'made in Quebec' – latched onto the wave of eroticism. And who should carry the wave along but the federal government, which had decided by then to help the cinema industry.

The Canadian Film Development Corporation

Created in 1967, the Canadian Film Development Corporation was looking for an industry to help. It needed to invest, and it needed to make that money turn a profit. It is thanks to the intervention of the CFDC that there is anything vaguely resembling a feature film industry today.

It became important to make money out of an industry which, by all reasonable estimations, was just not going to be profitable. And in Quebec, 'where the action was' in the early days, there developed a kind of psychosis. Every film which was produced had to make money at all costs, and the rules of the game where those which the Americans had laid down oh so long ago. Formulas followed formulas, stars followed stars, until the public became exhausted and disenchanted. For the myth which still haunts English Canada – that the public in Quebec loves its own films and is doggedly faithful to them – was true for only a few years in Quebec. That public is no more stupid than any other public, and there was a limit to how many times they would accept the same warmed-up meal, despite variations in the sauce.

The successive waves of films rolled over a public which was growing increasingly skeptical. After the formula-makers had run through eroticism, they added comedy, creating

Quebec's all-time biggest grosser, **Deux femmes en or** by Claude Fournier. The sequels were dreary failures.

Erotic comedy gave way to straight comedy; the public had grown weary of nudes and mediocrity. After **Loving and Laughing** came **Keep It in the Family** and the others: **Tiens-toi bien après les oreilles à papa, J'ai mon voyage, Tout feu tout femme.** All were equally forgettable. Comedy was the stuff of the local television programs and the films used the same stars, scenarists and situations. The public soon gave up, deciding that it was easier to sit at home than to go out if nothing new was to be offered.

Trying for a film for the whole family, one enterprising producer even dreamed up a Québécois western, **Mustang.** By this time the public had simply decided that if a film was "Québécois", it was bad. In fact, the distributors were accused of overkill, of billing each film as the 'biggest and the best' until they turned off a deceived public.

Meanwhile, Lefebvre, Jutra and Carle were still making films, defending their right to make *films d'auteur.* And at the NFB, Jacques Leduc, Jacques Godbout, Gilles Groulx and Clément Perron were into fictional films which avoided the formulas and which were often passionate personal statements.

Hard on the heels of the older generation came the young filmmakers: Jean Chabot, Michel Bouchard, Francis Mankiewicz, Jean-Guy Noël and André Forcier. Almost to a man, they couldn't get their films in front of the audiences and they fought their way into a film industry which was out of breath, dying of sclerosis.

Through it all, with admirable regularity, the Michel Braults, Pierre Perraults and Maurice Bulbulians would give us another film, a documentary, underlining how grand the *cinéma direct* could be and forcing others to wonder how filming in Quebec and gone so astray.

The Law Concerning Cinema

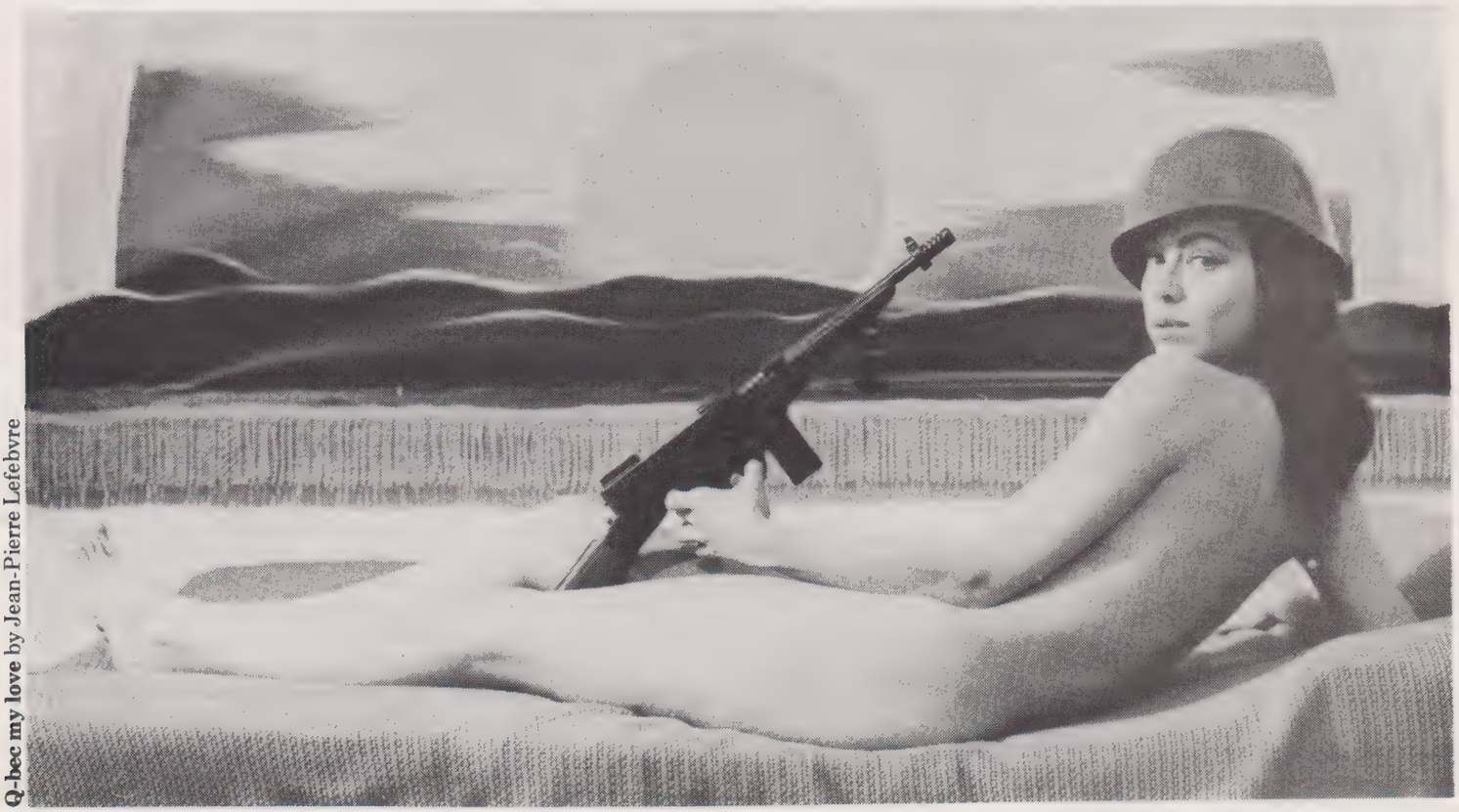
Even after the disaffection of the public, the commercial filmmakers tried and tried again, finally forcing the provincial government to intervene. There had been pressure on the government before – in fact, for 12 years – but the appeal had fallen on deaf ears. Now, the situation was critical. The Fédération québécoise des membres de l'industrie cinématographique, which regrouped all sectors of the industry, had dissolved itself, having first thrown out the Montreal Film Board (the 'major' distributors). The Association des réalisateurs occupied the Censor Board. The other associations dusted off the briefs which had been written over the years. Salvation was to come by way of a new law. A young Liberal minister, Denis Hardy, had it written. But then, it was easy for him since he knew so little about filming in the first place.

For better or for worse, the National Assembly voted Law No. 1 into existence in June 1975. The generosity of the law and its promise of millions was tarnished only by the evident will of the government to put the entire industry in tutelage. The directors, technicians and actors protested vigorously. The producers, distributors and exhibitors were more discreet but equally upset. In the period which followed filmmaking came to an absolute standstill and the lobbying began. Never was a minister so sought after.

Instead of heralding a fresh start for the industry, the law signaled the beginning of the end. Scandals in the government and internecine battles in the industry were the only sign of life over the last year. It took Hardy 18 months to name five of the seven members of the Institut which the law had created. It took more than 20 months before the DGCA had a permanent director. One wondered whether there was not a conscious desire to let the situation worsen in order to exercise fuller control over it later. Looking around us today, one sees that the covert forces which have long affected Canadian cinema, and especially commercial filming in Quebec, may be close to this goal.

The Abyss

That's how Claude Jutra got to Toronto and then to Vancouver to make two lovely films for television... in English. And why Gilles Carle went out to the country with a 16mm camera to make a film in black and white while **Exit** gets



Q-bec my love by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre

A musical moment from **Réjeanne Padovani** by Denys Arcand

postponed time and again. The latter will be filmed... in English and in French... if and when Carole Laure finishes her co-production with Yves Montand. Francis Mankiewicz and André Théberge continue to work for English television and Denys Arcand has withdrawn, having made nothing since **Gina.**

Is it a coincidence that two films which were selected for special screenings at the Cannes Festival last year have just had their commercial releases in Montreal this March? André Forcier's **L'eau chaude l'eau frette** and Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's **L'amour blessé** are as good as films in Quebec are likely to be at any time. And is it any wonder that the latest films by Pierre Perrault were seen in Paris early this year and are only scheduled for release in Quebec this April?

This is not to say that nothing's happening in Quebec. Shooting is still going on, but the price is high, and few are ready to discuss just how high. The co-productions are parading through, picking up a bit of cash on their way elsewhere. Sophia Loren and Donald Sutherland attract a lot of attention, but no one here pretends that they have anything to do with *le cinéma québécois*. The federal government, however, looks on these films with a friendly eye, and since there are still those in Quebec in search of an international market to hook a Québécois film to, it's easier to look the other way for the moment.

Still, co-productions aren't at the root of the malaise which exists; it's the way the co-productions are being organized and the fact that our cinema is being fashioned by financiers and lawyers and not by the craftsmen who could make it great. Jean-Pierre Lefebvre has just finished **Le vieux pays où Rimbaud est mort;** it will probably be at the next Cannes festival. Surely he has compromised nothing by making it under the Franco-Canadian co-production treaty. But can the same be said for Denis Héroux with his Anglo-Canadian co-production **The Uncanny?**

Finies les Folies

One day, not so long ago, a 'great' Canadian politician got angry and shouted "finies les folies", that's enough! Trudeau's words only provoked the opposite reaction and things have been getting curiouser and curiouser ever since. Is it any wonder that recent films like **Ti-Cul Tougas** by Jean-Guy Noël and **Ti-Mine, Bernie pis la gang** are full of dreams about running away to California and Florida? Is it surprising that Brassard and Tremblay have made a touching but meager film about individual happiness? When Quebec has nothing more to offer, what are you going to make films about? Denys Arcand was smart enough to hold his tongue. Too bad that other Québécois filmmakers didn't see things his way.

Nevertheless, life goes on, and *le cinéma québécois* refuses to give up the ghost quite so easily. It survives, thanks to Pierre Perrault who, in **Un royaume vous attend,** takes to task the technocrats who haven't yet finished dismantling the province. Thanks too to Michel Brault who, with **Le son des Français d'Amérique,** has made one of the most beautiful films of recent years. Arthur Lamothe has given the Indians of Quebec's northeast coast the right to speak out in **Carcajou et le péril blanc,** and Michel Moreau is making educational films which will reach beyond their normally restrained boundaries to a greater public. The fight is going on, thanks to those who still work in the maquis, trying to keep our cinema from becoming international just for the hell of it.

In trying to resuscitate **le cinéma québécois,** the new government has accepted a terrible gamble; the odds are against it, but these odds can be – and must be – changed. □

the sins of gilles carle

One of Quebec's most prolific and commercially oriented filmmakers is Gilles Carle. He has maintained a high standard of filmmaking, and has received a lot of critical attention. After the thematic study of his works which *Cinema Canada* published last year, here is a more probing look at the filmmaker, his philosophy of filmmaking, and the reaction of the critics. Gilles Carle, take two.

by Dr. J. Leach

The start of a fight as Bernadette (Micheline Lanctot) looks on in **La vraie nature de Bernadette**

Despite their popularity in Quebec and France, the films of Gilles Carle have rarely pleased the critics. In fact, with a few notable exceptions, there has been a disturbing unanimity of response among liberal Anglo-Saxon and radical Québécois critics. There are, of course, differences of emphasis but the "sins" of Gilles Carle can be conveniently collected under three main headings: 1) a diffuseness and carelessness of structure that causes sudden shifts in tone and leaves many loose ends; 2) exploitation of his actors and audience, especially the females among both; and 3) pessimistic endings expressive only of frustration and entrapment.

Before Carle is condemned to perdition, however, some examination of the critical assumptions on which these judgments are based might be in order. The ideal film that they imply would be based on a principle of restraint and economy of means, would be socially and politically engaged, and would avoid undue manipulation of the audience while nevertheless offering a positive (but not too obtrusive) resolution of its tensions. Many fine films have been made according to this recipe but it rests on a limited attitude to the film experience which treats a film as a self-contained product rather than as an event. Carle's films are a direct assault on this attitude and an attempt to open up film form to cope with the contradictions that he sees around him, contradictions which are rooted in the specific reality of Quebec but which have a wide resonance.

In challenging the conventional attitudes to film form, Carle is inevitably challenging the methods of conventional film criticism – and film criticism, as is its wont, has not yet met the challenge. Piers Handling's analysis of Carle's "themes", for example, offers valuable insights into the iconography of his work but does little to elucidate the originality of Carle's treatment of fairly commonplace motifs.[1] A more promising approach is suggested by Jean-Pierre Tadros in his treatment of **La tête de Normande St-Onge** (1975) as a "game of seduction", an idea to which I will return later.[2] In the absence of a critical theory that can take Carle fully into account, I have tried merely to outline his approach (using his own words wherever possible) and to suggest the ways in which this approach sets up a relationship with the audience that is both complex and stimulating.

Carole Laure as Normande: on her way to stardom?

Pierre Demers has described Carle's work as an attempt to escape into the past and into rural Quebec, away from the problems of modern urban reality.[3] A movement from city to country is certainly a feature of many of Carle's films and it is often associated with an exploration of the past. Marie Chapdelaine searches for her father in **La mort d'un bûcheron** (1972), while a halfbreed tries to renounce the white side of his nature in **Red** (1969). But in both cases the return to the past is shown to be a delusion and the characters have to come to terms with their present reality: Marie's father has died in a labor dispute that bears directly on Quebec's present state and Red finds that the Indian way of life has become riddled with contradictions as a result of its contact with "civilization". Carle's treatment of nature, too, is far from the naivety of Rousseauism: in **La vraie nature de Bernadette** (1971) the city woman finds that her ideal of a pastoral life does not take into account either the brutal side of nature or the mechanization of modern farming. Similarly, the retreat into the wilderness of St-Pierre and St-Marie in **Les mâles** (1970) does not resolve the contradictions of their lives and they end up stranded in the urban desolation of Montreal.

Carle's memories of his own past in northern Quebec do, however, provide the basis for his vision of Quebec as a locus of contradictions:

> Our radio picked up Buffalo and Montreal, always together, never separate, so that the religious broadcasts always had a pleasant background of country and western music... We seven children would thus recite our rosaries at a gallop, learning that in Quebec the most contradictory dreams are possible.[4]

This recollection of childhood is not a retreat from modern reality but part of his attempt to give that reality a mythic dimension and to link everyday reality with the "great realities". His first feature, **La vie heureuse de Léopold Z** (1965), originated as a documentary on snow removal and it still contains "documentary" sequences detailing the drabness of Léopold's existence and the procedures of his job. Yet Léo is quickly drawn into a three-way conflict, present in all Carle's films, between a materialistic reality (the loan office where even the pen is chained to the table), the false myths which society uses to prevent him from rebelling against this reality (Christmas as a time for family and church), and the impotent dreams through which he tries to escape from social pressures (Josita the nightclub singer, Florida or the Caribbean on credit). The audience is confronted with images that embody these tensions: as Léo is torn between hearing his son sing at midnight mass or Josita sing at the nightclub, we see his snowplow battling the storm to the accompaniment of the warm rhythms of Caribbean music.

Such unexpected juxtapositions form the basis of Carle's style and force the audience to work on its response to the film. His constant search for contradictions has led Gerald Pratley to object that Carle "doesn't give himself enough time to work out or properly motivate his screenplays, resulting in slap-dash ideas and incidents, superficiality, melodrama and ultimately confusion".[5] Nat Shuster similarly complains that in **La mort d'un bûcheron,** Carle "isn't just satisfied with telling a story" but "rides off into umpteen directions, skipping and jumping".[6] But these unsettling dislocations are calculated and derive from his rejection of "films that seem profound because they deal with only one reality" and his willingness to run the risk of "appearing superficial" by presenting his vision in "a

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structure necessarily complex and diffuse". The proliferation of elements exposes the poverty of the official myths and the escapist fantasies. The three brothers in **Le viol d'une jeune fille douce** (1968) are named after the archangels Joachim, Gabriel, and Raphael, and they (as Carle puts it) "mythify themselves" while remaining oblivious to the contradiction between the myth and their reality as gangsters and rapists. **Bernadette** is built around the gulf between the banal and the religious in modern life, while **A Thousand Moons** (1975) contrasts the poverty of TV images, which the old Indian woman calls the white man's dreams, with the richness of the Indian myths that are slowly being forgotten.

Given the contradictory nature of their environment, Carle's characters cannot be the complete and fully rounded individuals of the "psychological" cinema that he, like many others, rejects. There is no such thing as a "true nature" in Carle, since character embodies the contradictions of society, and personality is not fixed but dynamic and fluid. The relationship of Carle to the theatre of the absurd is nowhere more apparent than in his assertion that "Only impossible characters are possible today." Julie, in **Le viol,** invites our sympathy as the victim of her brothers' aggression but we also have to watch her sit calmly by as they rape the hitchhiker. Bernadette, as Carle describes her, is "simultaneously a saint and a prostitute, a generous woman and an egoist". The spectator is confronted with characters who are "simultaneously antipathetic, sympathetic, violent, gentle, evil" and is thus prevented from achieving a secure relationship with the "world" on the screen.

The single perspective of conventional drama and film disappears and Carle sets out to view the "drama" of life "in as many of its facets as possible." Despite the multiplicity of subjects and viewpoints, however, the element of drama is not eliminated from Carle's work: "Since I examine life and since life is dramatic, drama arises naturally from the film." The result is that Carle's films can contain strong dramatic, even melodramatic, conflicts without betraying the complexity and contradictions that he finds in life.

This refusal to adopt, or allow the audience to adopt, a single, fixed viewpoint derives from Carle's rejection of all dogma:

> I do not accept any orthodoxy, whether political, sociological or economic. Generally, man is compartmentalized, divided, reduced to a series of diverse values, and among these values some are privileged as being more noble... whereas what is necessary is a global vision of things and of people.

For Carle, dogma and orthodoxy represent the false myths which society imposes on the individual from above in order to perpetuate the established order. This idea is most clearly expressed in **Les corps célestes** (1973) which Carle describes as "a satire on ideologies". The "heavenly bodies" are both the physical attributes of the prostitutes who distract the miners from the dark reality of their subterranean existences and the religious and political myths that come from the skies (via radio antennae). Since the film is set in 1938, the voice of Hitler dominates the airways but the ending transcends time as we hear the voices of Kennedy, Nixon, and Trudeau.

Carle insists on the parallel between hierarchies in society and those in conventional cinema. He tries to avoid setting up structures which impose a viewpoint on the audience and instead opens up the medium by treating it as "a series of elements in which all are important". Most films tend to privilege either the dialogue or the image and the other elements merely support the chosen one, but Carle sabotages this approach either by presenting contradictions within the image or between the image and the soundtrack. **Les corps célestes,** for example, opens with a shot of a radio antenna and a union jack while the voice of Hitler is heard on the soundtrack, and the film is built out of the contrast between the menacing broadcasts and the sexual escapades depicted in the images. The dialectic set up here can be compared to that at the end of **Normande St-Onge** when images of Normande in a state of inertia are juxtaposed with images of her fantasies of sexual dominance, a dialectic that is not resolved by the final image of the old lady ungratefully stating that Normande never cared for her. In **Léopold Z** and **Bernadette** the cheerful music, Caribbean and country respectively, creates an uneasy lightheartedness in view of the frustration expressed in the images; the letters read on the soundtrack of **La mort d'un bûcheron** provide a contemplative counterpoint to the urgency and confusion shown in the images.

Donald Pilon and Carole Laure get acquainted in **Les corps célestes**

Just as Carle's approach to film form reflects his open approach to reality, so his objection to the compartmentalization of humanity is reflected in his rejection of the established genres which compartmentalize cinema. He sets out to mix up genres in the most startling ways, juxtaposes the comic and the serious, and claims that all his films contain elements of the love film and the *policier*. The genre of the western no longer corresponds to reality but some of the assumptions of the genre can still be found (anachronistically) in reality. Since Carle "takes reality into account", his films take on the qualities of the genre which shapes (and limits) the reality with which he is concerned. Thus **Le viol** becomes a modern version of the revenge western with the arrival of the brothers to defend their sister's honor; the entry of the police in **Les mâles** and **Normande St-Onge** turns these films briefly into *policiers* (comic in the first case); **Red** intermittently becomes a gangster film, developing the genre's essential parallel between gangsterism and capitalism; while **La mort d'un bûcheron** begins as an erotic film (a debased, modern version of *Maria Chapdelaine*) but ends as a political film as Marie moves from naive victim to an awareness of the historical forces shaping her society.

The movement from being exploited to becoming aware is basic to all of Carle's films, often for the characters but always for the audience. Yet this movement is often obscured, for those conditioned to the idea of film as mirror or as dream, by Carle's apparent playfulness. Carle himself has admitted that he has "always liked to play with names" but such games are not merely self-indulgent. The names of his characters connect them with the contradictions and myths of their society: Léopold Z thus has the universality and lack of specific identity of Kafka's K but his initial also makes him, the typical Québécois, the last of men; the title of **Red** appears in the opening credits boldly printed in blue but, to suggest that the halfbreed finally achieves his identity in death, his name appears in red at the end. Red's given name is Reginald Mackenzie, an indication of society's attempt to impose its own order on the savage or unknown. Names represent a narrowing down of possibilities and much of Carle's play with names exposes society's fear of the unnameable. Names drawn from the Bible are, of course, abundant in Quebec, and Carle uses the idea of Christian and family names as an example of society's attempt to fit individuals into its mold. Bernadette escapes from the bourgeois identity provided by her husband's name (Brown) but can only assert her freedom by returning to the name she inherited from her father (Bonheur); she is finally crushed by the people who identify her with the saint from whom her Christian name is derived. In attempting to escape from the restrictions symbolized by names, Bernadette (like Marie Chapdelaine and Normande St-Onge, is forced to face up to what Carle calls "the pagan side of the Québécois".

By exposing the inadequacy of film illusion, the inappropriateness of genres, and the loss of identity involved in naming, Carle creates a game which exposes as a game the bundle of conventions and artifice that usually passes for reality. His game grows out of the contradictions of modern Quebec and is one in which the audience is "implicated, individually and collectively". The problems of Quebec are seen as an intensification of the problems of any consumer society: frustration and violence are the result of society's attempt to suppress contradiction. The brothers in **Le viol** turn the complexities of Julie's life into a simple formula of honor violated; the gangster/businessmen of **Red** eliminate the contradiction represented by the halfbreed; the bosses in **La mort d'un bûcheron** violently suppress the stirrings of independence among the workers; and the lawyer in **Normande St-Onge** preserves his reputation by consigning his sister, an eccentric ex-striptease artist, to an asylum. In all cases, the attempt to eliminate contradiction defeats itself because of the violent means used to preserve social quiet.

The implications of a consumer society are central to **Bernadette.** The confined, bourgeois existence against which Bernadette initially rebels is imaged by the framed pictures of vegetables which decorate the walls of her suburban home. Her idealistic rebellion is translated onto

Bernadette's old pals watch in dismay in **La vraie nature de Bernadette**

a political level when the farmers dump vegetables on the highway to protest against the low prices that society is prepared to pay for them. Even this demonstration ends in frustration: the motorists, who have just stripped Bernadette's house in search of religious relics, start loading their cars with free vegetables until Bernadette opens fire on them. The mob's idolatry saves them from the responsibility of solving their own problems and masks a desire to get something for nothing. Similarly the public outcry against the "apemen" in **Les mâles** reveals the essential voyeurism of a society that condemns rape but which is fascinated by the lurid details.

Denise Filiatrault takes matters into her own hands in **La mort d'un bûcheron**

Last year, Carle's film **La tête de Normande St-Onge** was widely publicized at the Cannes film festival

Voyeurism is clearly the most obvious means by which an audience can become implicated in the film experience. Carle has, in fact, been accused of pandering to "le milieu de 'showbiz' " by confining himself to the bourgeois conception of social revolution as a "struggle for sex".[7] Molly Haskell uses **La mort d'un bûcheron** as an example of how "a director, even with all good intentions, can hardly help turn a beautiful woman into a sex object"; she feels that "what starts as an exposé becomes exploitation."[8] But it is precisely the element of exploitation that prevents the film from becoming the kind of exposé that works up righteous indignation but leaves us essentially untouched (since the exploiters are always others). Jean-Pierre Tadros has described the "astonishing complicity between Gilles Carle and Carol Laure" and the films do dwell on the fine line between involvement and exploitation, between the erotic as a heightening of human experience and the erotic as an attempt to escape responsibility.[9] Almost all his films include, literally or metaphorically, the rape of a sweet young girl and this rape is seen as a symbol of the processes of consumer society as well as of the process of film viewing.

Voyeurism and exploitation are seen as products of a desire to remain innocent, to consume without responsibility. Carle argues that "it is necessary to deflower reality so that something new and unexpected can emerge": in **La mort d'un bûcheron** the audience "innocently" becomes part of the society which exploits Marie but then follows her to an awareness of the contradictions of that society (and of the film experience). Julie, in **Le viol,** has been described as "a normal girl living in an abnormal society" whose mind is raped by her environment, but our response to this metaphorical rape remains as ambiguous as that to the actual rape of the hitchhiker, which we see only from the detached perspective of an extreme long shot.[10] Our response to the attempted kidnapping and rape in **Les mâles** is complicated by the girl's sexual teasing and her evident enjoyment of the experience. While the impulsiveness of St-Pierre and St-Marie offers a refreshing contrast to the hypocrisy of society, St-Marie's sculptures (which inevitably seem to take on the form of female breasts) express both the sexual frustration of the men in the wilderness and their treatment of women as objects. These absurd totem-poles fit into the film's exploration of the relationships between the animal and the human and between nature and art, while the central issue becomes the balancing of the

subjective and the objective both in human relationships and in the experience of film.

The world of Carle's films is one in which individuals have become so subjective, so involved with themselves, that other people have become objects. The searches which provide the basic structure of most of his films are always ultimately searches for a way out of this state of alienation and for a sense of identity. It has been objected that these searches often tend to involve a movement away from the urban centres of modern Quebec and thus to evade an analysis of possible political solutions. Separatism and the language issue, for example, never become central to his films, although Anglo-American economic and cultural imperialism provides a background to all of them (the car show in **Red,** Brown in **Bernadette,** the cowboy outfits worn by many of his *macho* figures). Before their retreat to the backwoods in **Les mâles,** St-Pierre had been involved with union activity and St-Marie had been arrested in a student protest. But their retreat is as ineffective as that of Bernadette, who comes to realize that Thomas' political activism is more practical than her own reliance on "natural" love. **La mort d'un bûcheron** probes the realities of a society structured around paper, a society of "the lumberjack, the Scottish bosses of Canadian International Paper... of the novel, of packing cases and of electronic printing presses". **Les corps célestes** uses its basic metaphor of the brothel to equate prostitution and imperialism and "to show war as impotence, and not as a manifestation of power".

The search brings a new awareness but rarely a sense of release. Red solves the mystery of his half-sister's murder but is gunned down before he can expose her husband's facade of respectability, Léopold Z goes to midnight mass with his family, the runaway lovers return to the brothel in **Les corps célestes,** and Normande St-Onge retreats to a world of sexual fantasy. But the key factor is that the audience's desire for an ending which resolves the issues is frustrated. An insight into Carle's purpose in this can be found in his description of Léopold Z as a "pre-revolutionary" figure who has "many qualities, but they are unemployed".[11] The transition from pre-revolutionary to revolutionary is not made in the film because it has not been made in reality. The audience is denied the satisfaction of a vicarious revolution.

Any resolution of the tensions is left up to the audience, Carle's chief concern being to bring these tensions to the level of consciousness and to point to the multiple levels of reality that must be taken into account before they can be resolved satisfactorily. The issue of the family, for example, is one that dominates most of Carle's films but his attitude to it remains complex. The family unit in his films has cracked under the pressure of the collapse of traditional values but still fights desperately and destructively to reassert itself. Attempts by Marie Chapdelaine and Normande St-Onge to reconstruct the family are doomed to failure, but alternatives are no more successful. The rigid family of white society might be replaced by a looser structure modeled on the Indian way of life, but Indian society as depicted in **Red** and **A Thousand Moons** has been unable to withstand the pressures of "civilization". Experiments with communal living collapse in **Les mâles, Bernadette,** and **Normande St-Onge:** these communes fail to come to terms with the irrational in human nature and lack any true communal basis. Carle has said that if the action of **Les corps célestes** "had taken place today, I would have done it with hippies who want to create a commune, and no longer with a pimp who wants to create a paradise-brothel". The attempt to create a paradise is to impose an absolute from outside (on the model of imperialism) whereas the only possible relationship between individuals must come from within.

What is needed is a social structure that can mediate between the subjectivity of the individual and the objectivity of his world without interposing false myths or escapist dreams. Carle cannot provide the answers, even if he had them, because he would be relieving the individual spectator of his own responsibility. Ultimately Carle's concern is to create "the unexpected film": "The first political step is to increase, not to reduce, the standard of lucidity." Carle's approach is the opposite of that of minimal cinema but his goal is the same: the breaking down of the conventional structures of film viewing in order to encourage a more open and less conditioned response to the structures of society. □

A revengeful Red (Daniel Pilon)

Notes

1. Piers Handling, 'Themes from Gilles Carle', **Cinema Canada,** No. 26, March 1976, pp. 28-33.

2. Jean-Pierre Tadros, 'Le Jeu de la séduction', **Cinéma Québec,** Vol. 4, No. 8, pp. 6-8.

3. Pierre Demers, **'Les corps célestes', Cinéma Québec,** Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 11.

4. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations by Carle are taken from three interviews in **Cinéma Québec:** Vol. 1, No. 9, pp. 17-21; Vol. 2, No. 5, pp. 19-26; Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 28-32. All translations are, unfortunately, my own.

5. Gerald Pratley, **'La vraie nature de Bernadette',** in Peter Cowie (ed.), *International Film Guide: 1973* (London: Tantivy Press, 1972), p. 124.

6. Nat Shuster, **'La mort d'un bûcheron',** *Motion,* January-February 1974, pp. 49-50.

7. Demers, Loc. Cit., pp. 11, 13.

8. Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), p. 354.

9. Tadros, Loc. Cit., p. 7.

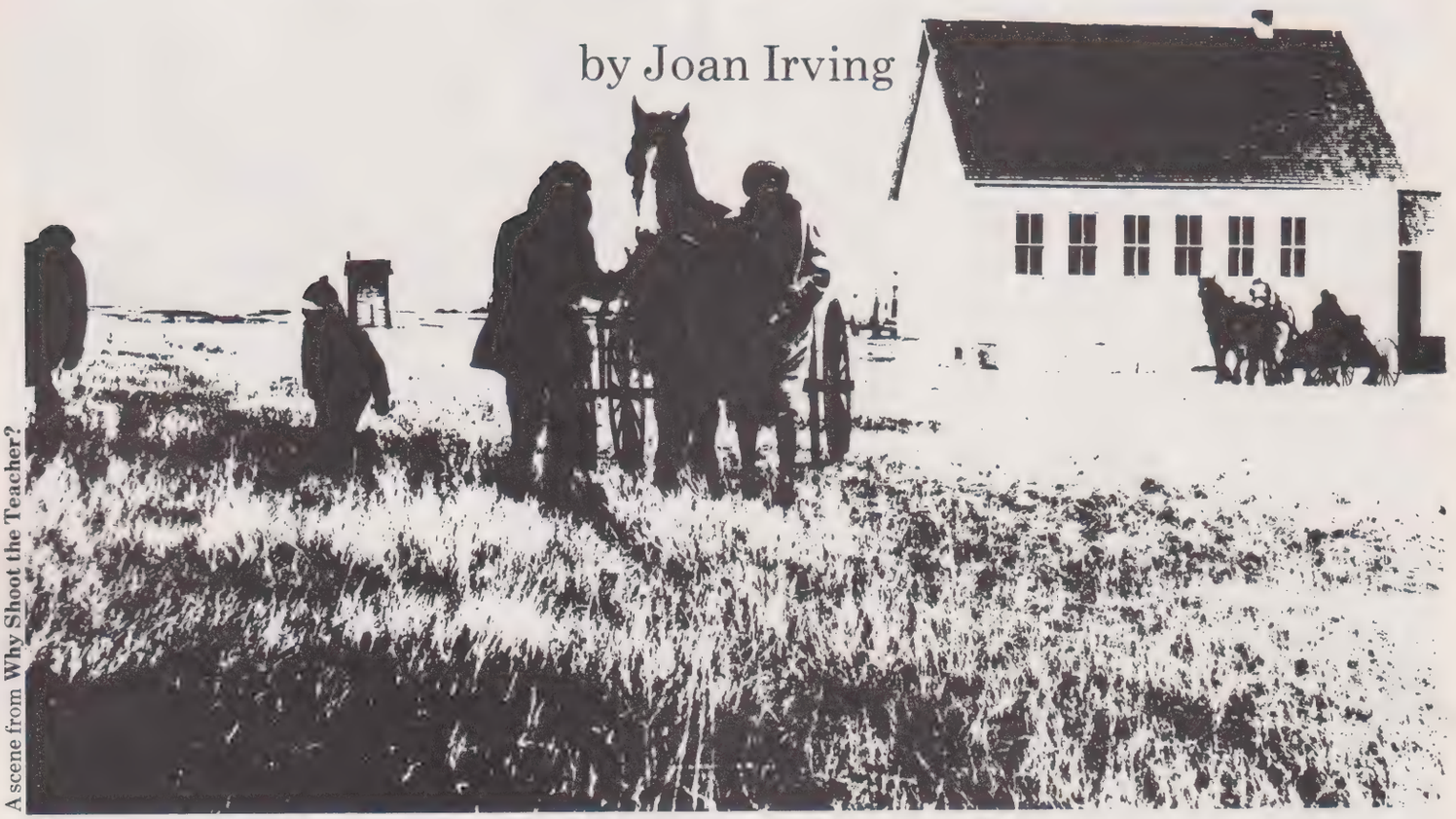
10. Handling, Loc. Cit., p. 30.

11. Quoted in René Prédal, *Jeune Cinéma Canadien* (Paris: Premier Plan, 1967), p. 40.

Alberta is booming. Over the past few years, a good number of important American features have been shot there, and the new tax incentives may well increase the number of Canadian features and co-productions to be filmed there. Joan Irving returned to the west to take the pulse of those in the industry, and to report on both the official and unofficial views in a province where excitement is palpable.

rustling bucks

by Joan Irving



A scene from **Why Shoot the Teacher?**

Apparently around the year 1920 there were a few people in Calgary, Alberta, who thought they might make their city the Hollywood of the north. For reasons it would take a historian to sift through, the company that expected to bring this about, Canadian Photoplay Productions Ltd., never made more than its one very successful film, **Back to God's Country** (1919).

There were other companies, Canadian and American, making "feature" films in Calgary, Banff and Jasper during the '20s, but what local industry there was all but disappeared during the Depression. It has taken almost four decades to get it moving again.

The business of making films and the cities and people of Alberta have changed during those years. What attracted producers to that part of the country back in the '20s hasn't: the mountain scenery, the snow; the prairies, horses and a few odd real-life cowboys.

Last year six features and an estimated 40 (private sector) short films were shot in Alberta. Early predictions suggest '77 will be one of the best years yet for the province's film industry.

Having worked as an historical researcher, a community organizer, and a full-time staff reporter, Joan Irving is presently a freelance writer living in Montreal.

"You want to talk to somebody in Alberta about film? Start with Chuck Ross," advised Ted Rouse when I phoned him at the Toronto CFDC office to ask for leads. And that's exactly where I started.

If you're a producer or production manager searching for locations and have Alberta in mind, you can call Chuck Ross and he or someone he delegates, who knows Alberta as well, will pick you up at any provincial airport, read and discuss the script, then show you around the suitable locations. It was Ross who found the Hanna schoolhouse for last summer's shooting of **Why Shoot the Teacher?** It was he also who suggested that Robert Altman consider Morley Flats, west of Calgary, as the location for Altman's feature, **Buffalo Bill and the Indians.**

Chuck Ross is director of Film Industry Development for the province of Alberta. He has been since 1973 when the Alberta government decided to become actively involved in encouraging film producers to make their films in Alberta and moved Ross over from his post as director of government photo services.

Though their literature does not single out feature films, the underlying aim of the Film Industry and Development Office is to attract feature films. The bigger the budget and the more spent in Alberta the better. And though Ross has visited Britain, New York and Toronto trying to "sell" Alberta, the initial and major current focus of the office is directed upon Los Angeles.

When Chuck Ross arrived in LA in 1973 to start knocking on producers' doors (on a recent visit he contacted over 30 producers) there were already 16 states actively soliciting location work on features. There are now about 20 states and two provinces (Ontario appointed its Film Development Officer in 1975; British Columbia is reportedly considering the move) competing for Hollywood's business.

Alberta's advantage is its great variety of uncluttered terrain: the grass-matted foothills, the long flat horizons of the Prairies, the unbounded beauty of the Rockies – all within a reasonable distance of accommodations. That, and the assistance Ross himself can offer the producer. Ross calls whomever he has to in order to facilitate the producer's job and to cut through, as he puts it, "the damnable burden of red tape that accompanies any film production." Much of his work is done on the phone, from his Edmonton office, overlooking the North Saskatchewan River.

There are no financial enticements other than the fact that Alberta remains the only province without a sales tax – no hidden grants or subsidies. If producers can't expect any financial consideration for "locating" in Alberta, neither are they bothered by provincial government industry regulations and restrictions. Local crews and actors are hired voluntarily. There is no stipulation that the producer indicate the film was shot in Alberta.

According to Ross, the majority of producers are gracious enough to credit locale. He cites Altman's **Buffalo Bill,** a film that indicated "shot in Alberta" up front in its publicity campaign. "That's the kind of publicity you can't buy." To understand the comment it helps to know that Ross's one-man shop is part of a government department known as Industrial Development and Tourism.

Some producers, of course, aren't so gracious and if their films aren't doing much to promote tourism, neither is Ross really concerned with the tourist end of things.

In January, 1973, *Variety* carried an article estimating that over the previous 18-month period $2 million had been pumped into the Alberta economy through feature film production. Ross calculates the 1976 figure at around $4.7 million. (Statistics are supplied by the production companies and do not include the miscellaneous expenses of non-Albertan crew members during their stay in the province.)

Alberta's movie man, C.N. "Chuck" Ross

Not a Kongian figure to be sure, but the investment does create employment in the areas of goods and services. "It directly generates a great infusion of capital, for a short period of time, in the locality where the film is being produced. It's good for the business community, particularly that part of it dealing in accommodations, transportation, building supplies..."

Ross is interested in attracting feature productions, be they American or Canadian, for another reason. "If this industry is ever to become established and viable our people in the various crafts that make up the industry must have exposure to feature work and be able to work alongside others who are highly professional in their fields. Over the past three years this has happened in Alberta."

When Edmonton producer Fil Fraser was looking for a crew to work on **Why Shoot the Teacher?** this past summer, for many of the posts he didn't have to go further away than Calgary. "You can find people in Calgary who have worked on six or seven features," Fraser says. "There's an attitude developing here, you might call it western chauvinism, a feeling that yes, we can do it here.

"I decided two years ago to go ahead with the **Why Shoot the Teacher?** project and just kept plugging until it came together. I can't say it was easy, what with the complexity of the project and the money handling, but I would say it was no more difficult to do here than anywhere else. In fact it may have been easier in some ways than to try and make the film in Toronto. There's a lot of cynicism in Toronto. They have made so many amateur films there under the guise of professional features."

Fraser likes Alberta and wants to continue living there. More important, he wants to continue making feature films from, but not necessarily in, Alberta. Part pragmatist, part hustler – "The question of whether or not there can be a Canadian or Albertan film industry is part of the problem" – Fraser has maintained the momentum behind the making of his first feature and has slated a second, **Back to**

Beulah to be shot this summer. (A W.O. Mitchell story and screenplay to be directed by Eric Till.)

And while industry people in Alberta don't all share Fraser's optimism about the growth of a local, Alberta-produced feature film industry, many have helped him with more than just their goodwill.

Not so long ago the media tended to portray Albertans as either Bible-belters or cattle barons. The rustle of oil money set off a realignment of images – the one that cleared first was the image of Alberta the rich.

It's true you don't have to look far to see the signs of prosperity and growth. In Calgary in every direction, former hayfields are covered with houses, more houses, more expensive houses. It's the same in Edmonton. Lethbridge won't catch up for a long time but it too is growing. It is not the houses, however, that impress. One of the finest theatre complexes in the country, the Citadel, is newly opened in Edmonton. Calgary has a new museum building to house the extensive Glenbow collections. In fact almost all the buildings in downtown Calgary are under five years old.

Until recently almost none of the available private investment money in the province found its way to the local film industry, and only slowly is this changing. Money invested in films was most often collected by national brokerage firms and slapped onto "anonymous" tax shelter films. One estimate was that several millions of dollars had left the province this way in the past couple of years.

On the other hand, Mickey Bailey, whose feature **Wolfboy** was shot this fall on his animal farm (Wildlife Enterprises) west of Calgary, says most of his films have been financed from outside the province. "Business here has been outstanding. So far all the money has come from the outside but the local people are starting to get the idea."

Bailey returned to Alberta in 1966 after working for 23 years in the United States, 13 of which were spent at the Walt Disney studio. His natural-habitat animal farm (326 animals, 31 of them wolves), though open to the public, specializes in trained animals for film and television.

"We westerners have got a little chip on our shoulders because we haven't been able to get federal money to get the industry going. The only good thing the government has done for us is the 100% tax write-off. It's beautiful; it should be that way," he says.

Len Stahl, secretary of the AMPIA, learns about a film processing machine from Nick Zubko of Cine Audio

Bailey was the one who estimated that over the next five years Alberta would double or even triple the number of features made there. "The trend now is to go on location, to use natural settings. Ontario can't compete with us when it comes to terrain... I can duplicate any scene except desert on my own land." Processing? "We've got a one-day air express service to Vancouver; it's not much of a disadvantage..." .

It seems everybody in the industry is talking boom these days. Some are guarded in their assessment not of the value of the tax law but of the way Canadian producers are going to respond to the situation. Will we see a sudden production boom, not of Canadian films but of films that "look" Canadian – the six points out of 10? Chuck Ross applauds the law and stresses that the only way it will have a lasting effect on the development of the industry is if the federal government leaves it to work for between five and 10 years. Across the country, the phones are starting to ring.

Les Kimber in Calgary says, "People have been phoning to inquire what business is like here. Some of them want to come back, just when it's getting better. How many of them stayed here and went broke, pioneered... Well, I guess competition is always good."

Kimber has been working in Alberta as a production manager for the past 10 years. He put in 11 months in 1976 on feature productions and planned to spend the twelfth on a beach in Hawaii. Working year-round in film production in Calgary is rare; Kimber obviously savors his position.

Most of his experience has been on American films – **Little Big Man** and Altman's film, to name two oldies – and most recently the Dino de Laurentiis feature shot in Newfoundland, **Orca** (with another Calgarian, Rob Lockwood, as AD). In the early years Kimber might have been one of a few Canadians working on the American productions. Now he estimates it is usually 50-50. "If Canadians are available who have the credits and can do the job then they'll get hired. It's all a matter of their track record. The big problem here is finding people qualified in electrical work or carpentry."

And then there's the question of unions. Some skirted the issue, "Unions will be unions everywhere," while others were more outright in their criticism: The Calgary IATSE local has a reputation for running a closed shop. Kimber spoke of the need for training programs. "They need more people and better training in every department. I can understand that it's tough for people in the unions to make a living year-round but it seems to me the unions should try to help the industry more in this country. A lot of guys aren't interested in film, they're just in it for the money." Unions will be unions and union critics will be union critics everywhere. But enough said about features.

Documentary and industrial – short subject work – remains the largest employer of Albertan filmmaking talent. Even commercials aren't an important revenue source since the majority or the national big-budget commercials originate in the East.

Nick Zubco, the respected 54-year-old grandpapa of filmmaking in Alberta, says it was television that set the industry on its feet. "CBC contracts and documentaries kept people going."

Zubco now owns and manages film processing plants in Edmonton and Calgary (Cine Audio Ltd.). In 1945, with a couple of years of NFB experience under his belt, Nick bought a Kodak 16 mm Cine Special and became the owner of one of three motion picture cameras in the province. He freelanced for Movie Tone News, the NFB and the University of Alberta where, in 1957, he pioneered in medical (heart surgery) films.

Zubco spoke enthusiastically about several Edmonton filmmakers, including Anne Wheeler and Lorna Rasmussen whose film **Great Grandmother** (Filmwest Associates Ltd) won top honors at the Alberta Film Festival (1976).

Regarding the future of feature films in the province, he was somewhat skeptical. "Having seen things from the beginning I'm aware of the fluctuations in the industry. There have always been a few American features done here, in the mountains. The same thing is happening now. It comes and goes..."

In 1973 Zubco became the founding president of AMPIA (Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association); it now lists 14 member companies and 60 associate members. AMPIA has had two main areas of involvement. It has organized a series of technical seminars (lighting, sound, editing, etc.) to upgrade Alberta filmmakers. It has also, over the past three years, been entrenched in a freud with ACCESS, the Alberta government radio and TV corporation (comparable to OECA in Ontario). AMPIA claims that by stepping into areas formerly dominated by the private sector, ACCESS has retarded the growth and even damaged a viable private-sector film industry in Alberta.

The essence of this debate has been aired on a national scale with the recent publication of the BMC or Tompkins Report (excerpts of which appeared in **Cinema Canada** volume 32).

In a brief released this fall AMPIA denounced ACCESS for allegedly setting up a "media empire". ACCESS is budgeted at between $6 and 7 million per year and employs over 200 people. The corporation buys time on various TV stations throughout the province to air its programs.

Bill Marsden, current association president, says the big problem has been ACCESS's definition of the word "educational". "Their definition is all-encompassing. They are constantly in search of subject matter and they make films on anything. ACCESS is invading markets which might have been available to the private sector. I've seen ACCESS programming in prime time opposite a major movie on another station... are they trying to be an Alberta CBC?

"In this business we're all alternately healthy and unhealthy. We can't seem to find a leveler; I felt educational films could have been that leveler."

Marsden, an Edmonton producer whose career in films spans two decades, is also critical of the regional policies of the NFB. He charges that the opening of the NFB regional offices was the "worst thing that ever happened to the film scene in Canada. It dried up work previously filled by the private sector... It fragments companies, hiring one or two people and not the whole creative team... What gives mandarins the idea that only civil servants can make films? I mean the NFB people come out as if they're God's gift to the film industry; they're going to teach the natives how to handle a camera. There was a time when the public sector was a pace-setter in filmmaking. Now the quality of films produced by the private sector is much higher."

The Edmonton desk of the Prairie studio of the NFB is presided over by Tom Radford. Radford is a freelancer contracted to the Film Board where he works as a producer. The Edmonton office houses the distribution section as well as the staff producers (Radford and Anne Wheeler; there is no other production staff to date). Of the five documentary films in production in December, all were being directed by freelancers.

"A small office is a blessing but it's also a curse. We have the possibility of a direct relationship with filmmakers – they can walk in the door and explain their ideas. At the same time, it's often hard to cover the work."

According to Radford, approximately 30 per cent of the work in progress was being done in association with ACCESS; he also spoke of plans, soon to be finalized, to co-produce a drama series with ACCESS. "We tend to trade a lot of people and equipment, and in some instances have shared research money with them." The advantage to the NFB seems to be through distribution. "We have a direct line to the audience through television. ACCESS finds us useful because we supply them with programming material."

President of the AMPIA, William Marsden

Over at Filmwest, the award-winning Edmonton company founded in 1971 by seven young filmmakers, one of the originals – Dale Phillips – commented that during discussions with Hugh Faulkner (then Secretary of State) last January in Edmonton a number of filmmakers asked Faulkner what decentralization of the NFB meant. "He assured us the NFB would take advantage of local resources – equipment and people. Quite the contrary is happening. They're using some local people but they use their own production facilities. That kind of thing rankles people who have worked as independents for 20 or 30 years trying to build up the industry. The NFB seems to hold a black and white view – that they should leave the private sector to do commercials."

Hassles aside, Phillips, Stein, Pappes and company say things aren't so bad. "Relatively speaking Alberta is one of the best places for filmmakers in Canada," ventured Stein. Why? "Because there's work."

"There's not the turnover in companies that there is in Toronto," Phillips added. "I usually bring back a copy of the yellow pages when I'm visiting Toronto, to keep track of the changes."

The tide that carried so many talented people out of the west to filmmaking centres in Eastern Canada and the U.S. may be turning. Problems exist, as they do everywhere, but in this "next year" Alberta filmmakers seem to be finally catching up to their long-laid hopes and plans. □

FAMOUS PLAYERS

salutes

The Juno Award Winners 1977

Awarded by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences

Female vocalist of the year, **Patsy Gallant**
Male vocalist of the year, **Burton Cummings**
Group of the year, **Heart**
Best-selling single, **Roxy Roller (Sweeney Todd)**
Best-selling international single, **Tina Charles: I Love to Love**
Best-selling Canadian album in Canada, **Neiges (André Gagnon)**
Best-selling international album, **Peter Frampton: Frampton Comes Alive**
Producer of the year, **Mike Slicker: Dreamboat Annie (Heart)**
Engineer of the year, **Paul Gallant: Are You Ready for Love? (Patsy Gallant)**
Best jazz recording, **Phil Nimmons: The Atlantic Suite (Phil Nimmons and Nine Plus Six)**
Best classical recording, **Beethoven's Complete Sonatas, vols. 1, 2 and 3 (Anton Kuerti)**
Best album graphics, **Ian Tamblyn**
Best new group, **T.H.P. Orchestra**
Best new female vocalist, **Colleen Peterson**
Best new male vocalist, **Burton Cummings**
Composer of the year, **Gordon Lightfoot**
Instrumental artist of the year, **Hagood Hardy**
Best country female vocalist, **Carroll Baker**
Best country male vocalist, **Murray McLauchlan**
Best country group, **The Good Brothers**
Best folk singer, **Gordon Lightfoot**

how gross the box office?

***Cinema Canada* believes that getting at the facts is one of the means by which the magazine can render service to the industry. Statistics tend to speak for themselves, and knowing what the score is helps us all as we continue to ponder the future of filming in Canada. The following article is the first installment of what shall appear as a monthly feature in following issues: the publication of box-office grosses.**

Compiled by Del Mehes and Connie Tadros

Publishing box-office grosses – the total revenues a film earns through ticket sales at the box office – is a risky business indeed. The figures published by ***Cinema Canada*** *are, to the best of our knowledge, exact. They have come to us from distributors, exhibitors and the Canadian Film Development Corporation.*

The information we requested from the distributors was the following: the box-office grosses on a few of the films which had done the best business in the period covered (from 15 Jan. to 15 Feb.) and all information on any Canadian films in distribution.

It should be said, however, that there is no law in Canada which obliges exhibitors or distributors to reveal the box-office figures, and therefore, we are working on an honor system. And many will say that this is unfair, that the results are unreliable.

The attitudes of distributors differed greatly one from another, as we called to gather the figures. Many were happy to provide the figures and felt that discussions about film distribution in Canada will become more lucid when the public has access to the box-office figures. We thank those distributors who gave us their ready cooperation.

Others were more hesitant and, although they felt that the idea was a good one, were not ready to give us the figures until some sort of objective monitoring system was set up. It was the familiar, "I'll-give-you-the-correct-figures-but-my-competitor-will-lie" line. Since there is little hope of an objective monitoring system in the near future, we can only hope that these distributors will soon change their minds.

*Then there were the modest men. It is no secret that certain films – **Spermula,** for example – make a pile of money for the distributor. And this distributor is, most often, a Canadian-owned distributor and not an American 'major' company. Several distributors, however, were reluctant to have the name of their companies associated with the exploitation films which they distribute. They preferred not to give us those box-office results, despite the fact that, commercially, these results compare favorably to those of the 'major' distributors.*

And then there were the intellectual objections. "Box-office grosses mean nothing by themselves. One needs to know the total production budget. And the advertising budget. And there should be some mention of the distribution agreement the company has with the foreign sales agent from whom he got the film..." And on and on.

*To the latter objections, **Cinema Canada** can simply state that we'll be glad to publish additional information as it is made available. But let's start with first things first, and get at the box-office grosses.*

Connie Tadros

"**Gross** (gros), *adj.*, 1. without deductions (opposed to *net*): *gross profits; gross sales.* 2. unqualified; complete; rank: *a gross scoundrel.* 3. flagrant and extreme: *gross injustice.* 4. indelicate, indecent, obscene or vulgar: *gross remarks.* 5. lacking in refinement, good manners, education, etc.; unrefined. 6. large, big or bulky. 7. extremely or excessively fat. 8. thick; dense; heavy: *gross vegetation.* 9. of or concerning only the broadest or most general considerations, aspects, etc. ..."

– The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1967

Code

The following information is given concerning the box-office grosses of films: title, country in which the film was produced (origin), name of the distributor in Canada, period during which the film was exhibited in Canada, places where the film was seen, total weeks of continuous exhibition and total box-office gross to date.

Special notes: The *period covered* is calculated from the first play date to the date which corresponds to the closing date for the box office figures. This does not mean that the film has played continuously between those two dates, nor that the film ceased playing on the later date. For this first compilation, the target period was from 15 Jan. to 15 Feb. and included films playing at that time. Some exceptions were made, and grosses were given when available for Canadian films which had played earlier. If the space marked *total weeks* is filled in, the film has played continuously for that number of weeks. If the space is left empty, we were not able to establish that the film played continuously between the dates of the 'period covered' and suggest that the film probably did not plays continuously during that time, i.e. Goldenrod, which was exhibited between 24 Sept. and 23 Jan., did not play continuously during that period. If only cities are mentioned under *places played,* it is believed that exhibition was confined to those cities. If names of provinces are mentioned, we believed that the film played in both the large and small cities of that province. The *total gross* is expressed in round figures, and includes all revenue at the box-office except provincial taxes.

All figures and dates were provided by either the distributor, the exhibitor or the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

Abbreviations: Can (Canada), Fre (France), GB (Great Britain), Nor (Norway), US (United States).

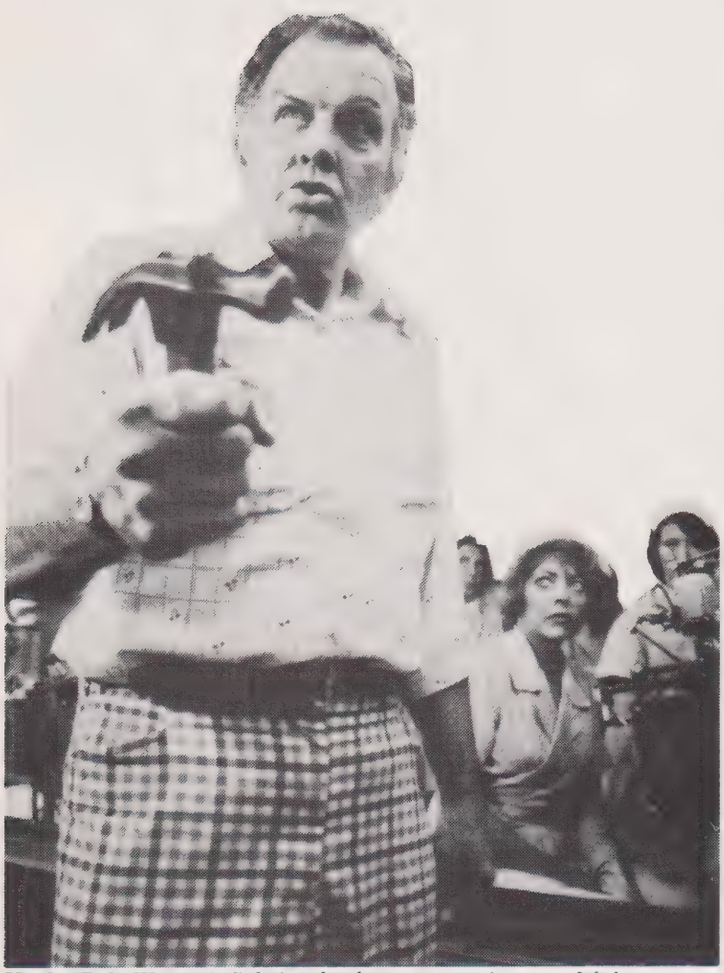
Characters from **Partners, Ti-Cul Tougas, The Supreme Kid,** and **Parlez-nous d'amour**

Title	Origin	Distributor	Period Covered	Places Played	Total Weeks	Total Gross to Date
The Booby Hatch	US	Frontier	28 Jan.-15 Feb.	Edmonton	3	$ 9,400
Blood in the Street	GB	Frontier	28 Jan.-11 Feb.	Toronto	2	10,300
Breaking Point	Can	Astral	20 Aug.-13 Jan.	BC-Alb-Sask-Man-Ont-Que-NS		309,000
Un citoyen se rebelle	Fre	Prospec	21 Jan.-15 Feb.	Que	3	27,000
Cousin cousine	Fre	New Cinema	21 Jan.-18 Feb.	Vancouver-Ottawa	4	65,000
Death Weekend	Can	Cinepix	17 Sept.-17 Feb.	Canada	22	883,600
Edvard Munch	Nor	New Cinema	21 Jan.-18 Feb.	Toronto	4	20,050
The Enforcer	US	Warner Bros.	22 Dec.-16 Feb.	BC-Ont-Que	8	2,511,000
Find the Lady	Can	Danton	11 Nov.-18 Jan.	Alb-Ont		18,000
Goldenrod	Can	Ambassador	24 Sept.-23 Jan.	BC-Alb-Sask-Man-Ont-Que-NB		40,000
J.A. Martin photographe	Can	National Film Board	11 Feb.-17 Feb.	Montreal	1	8,100
Je suis loin de toi Mignonne	Can	Films Mutuels	5 Nov.-27 Jan.	Que	12	464,000
The Man Who Skied Down Everest	Can	New Cinema	27 Jan.-17 Feb.	Calgary-Edmonton	3	39,000
Parlez-nous d'amour	Can	Films Mutuels	24 Sept.-16 Dec.	Que	12	381,000
Partners	Can	Astral	24 Sept.-15 Jan.	BC-Alb-Man-Ont-Que		49,300
Second Wind	Can	Astral	9 April-13 Jan.	BC-Alb-Sask-Man-Ont-Que-NB-Nfld		175,000
The Seven Percent Solution	GB	Universal	25 Dec.-11 Feb.	BC-Ont-Que	7	725,000
Shadow of the Hawk **Cauchemar de l'inconnu**	Can	Columbia	27 Aug.-15 Jan.	BC-Alb-Sask-Man-Ont-Que-NS-NB		754,000 255,000
The Shaggy D.A.	US	Bellevue	18 Dec.-10 Feb.	BC-Alb-Ont-Que	8	957,824
Shoot	Can	Ambassador	26 Nov.-21 Jan.	Toronto-Montreal	7	30,000
Shouldn't Happen to a Vet	GB	Ambassador	14 Jan.-3 Feb.	Montreal	3	10,800
Shout at the Devil	US	Ambassador	14 Jan.-3 Feb.	Montreal	3	13,500
Small Change	Fre	International		Toronto	11	38,811
The Supreme Kid	Can	Cinepix	4 Feb.-18 Feb.	Vancouver	2	6,800
A Star Is Born	US	Warner Bros	25 Dec.-11 Feb.	BC-Ont-Que	7	2,100,000

lightyears ahead

The CBC has given Canadian film enthusiasts a shot in the arm with its dramatic series *For the Record*. Marc Gervais takes a closer look below.

by Marc Gervais



Hank (Bob Warner) fighting back as competitors and labor try to force him out: director, Don Haldane

"To reflect this country in an honest way... to deal with our joys and problems – I believe this series does just that, in an exciting way."

PR handouts are not generally to be accepted without a goodly weight of salt, but this statement by John Hirsch, CBC-TV drama head, aptly describes *For the Record*, this year's continuation of the highly interesting CBC "journalistic dramas." TV dramas they are, to be sure; but in a very real sense they are movies, *films* commissioned by the CBC.

On Sunday nights, beginning January 16, a series of four films were shown across Canada. Initially, there were to be five; but the missing fifth film, Peter Pearson's **The Tar Sands,** was temporarily shelved because, apparently, its treatment of the Athabasca Tar Sands question was deemed too explosive. If Pearson's film measures up in any way to its four predecessors one can only wish for a speedy reversal of judgment.

●

For a number of reasons, the *For the Record* series seems condemned to relative obscurity, both at the critical and the mass-consumption levels – at least in those parts of Canada where people have a choice of TV channels.

How can the shows escape floundering on either the Scylla or the Charybdis of popular reviewing? On the one hand, your conscientious TV reviewer has about 10,000 offerings a week to choose from. In such circumstances, it is difficult to psyche oneself up into giving yet one more one-hour TV film serious, enthusiastic consideration. On the other hand, for the slightly more relaxed film reviewers, it's only a TV show after all, too short (one hour, yet) and CBC to boot. Noblesse oblige (almost) to ignore it totally.

Marc Gervais, Montreal film critic, is an associate professor in the department of communication arts at Concordia University. He is the author of ***Pier Paolo Pasolini,*** *edited by Seghers in Paris.*

Jenny (Anne Anglin) comforts Ada (Janet Amos): director, Claude Jutra

The same dilemma exists for the viewers. Those with a TV choice are so programmed by the thematic and audio-visual recipes of New-Hollywood's series factories that they simply refuse to look at anything reflecting different concerns and attitudes. The moviegoing public is in a similar bind. *For the Record* gives them no superstars, and no outlet for living out their sex-and-violence fantasies. Or if they take their moviegoing seriously, they surely will find no Fellini or Bergman among these Canadian TV offerings.

All of which is a pity, really. For the simple truth of the matter is that the four films shown on *For the Record* are excellent, within the limitations of their modest aspirations. They achieve exactly what they set out to do. And they are far superior to most of both the usual American TV fare and the Canadian feature films produced these last few years.

●

The concept guiding the series is an enlightened one, ideally suited to television. Surely Sport, Variety, and American Big-City Crime are not the only things of concern to Canadians. There are forces within our society, and daily events, that are the warp and woof of a good part of our lives. In the hands of good, insightful writers, directors, and technicians, this long-neglected dimension can furnish the stuff for good drama, and for good moviemaking.

For the Record, precisely, focuses upon this aspect of our lives. Its producer, Ralph L. Thomas – he also was involved with "journalistic dramas" last year, witness the "Performance" series and others – has succeeded in bringing talents together, but above all in sharing an understanding about a certain type of filmmaking. That extends to key practicalities: all the films have modest budgets, and are tailored, or structured, accordingly.

To put it another way, the *For the Record* films consciously and willingly share a common ethic and a common esthetic, both of which are a contemporary, adapted-for-TV reincarnation of what perhaps is the richest tradition in Canadian filmmaking.

It is an old truism that *the* cinema that has achieved great distinction in Canada is the documentary. Through the pioneer work of John Grierson and the infant NFB, a certain Canadian reality became the object of study, and then of film creativity. Canadian film directors long ago learned to *analyze* this or that aspect of the socio-economic cultural context. And they perfected the means to communicate the results of that analysis through film – very often with world-acclaimed success. As time evolved, the particular Canadian excellence centered more on the *direct cinema* approach, on both sides of the great cultural divide. Has anyone in the world matched the work of Michel Brault/Pierre Perreault, or of Allan King in the '60s?

Conversely, Canadian cinema has not yet enjoyed any glory days in what seems to be, for us, the more difficult area of the fiction movie.

The journalistic films commissioned by the CBC represent a serious attempt to graft fiction stories onto the main-line documentary tradition. Even the most cursory examination reveals that each of the films is structured on a popularized, yet far-reaching analysis of the society we live in, its various mechanisms, institutions, etc. At the level of texture, the films have the feel of reality about them; they breathe the sights and sounds of real places, things, people. Particularly in Don Haldane's two episodes, one rarely has the impression that effects are sought after for their own sake. The pre-existing "reality" seems more important.

Against this background individuals, however, do emerge: the fiction is structured around them. The characters are important; they are at the very heart of the situation. And so, the viewer cares, becoming involved in their plight, because it is an eminently human, believable one, reflecting our own lived experiences.

And that is perhaps the greatest strength of these films – their believability at an immediate, lived level. Save for a few recurringly facile, one-dimensionally heavy cops and mounties, there are no stereotypes. Indeed, the films do "reflect this country in an honest way... (they) deal with our joys and problems." And that, TV viewers, is rare enough in our mass-media wasteland!

●

A few random comments:

Don Haldane directed the two films which, I feel, are best fitted to the series' avowed aims. Haldane's movies, **Someday Soon** and **Hank,** are intelligent and incisive, yet glowing with human warmth. Haldane and his writers (Rudy Wiebe and Barry Pearson for **Someday Soon,** Don Bailey and Ralph L. Thomas for **Hank**) have done a remarkable job in bringing enormous economic problems down to human size. One

Dreamspeaker by Claude Jutra: a shaman and mute friend nurse a small boy with love

feels that one can cope. Suffusing the films is what, I suppose, one might term the *liberal* spirit: no self-pitying here; human beings have individual dignity, and they can engage in worthwhile struggles against injustice, the inhumanity of huge industrial concerns or ruthless neo-capitalist labor unions.

The effortlessness of Haldane's style is a joy to experience. Unaggressive, it trusts its own materials and insights; it does the job. The very sureness of touch and ease may be its greatest pitfall, however, for Haldane's films tend to lack that mysterious poetry which is a hallmark of much of the world's great cinema. In their weakest moments, they verge on the pedestrian. While the film language is far removed from the triteness and banality of the unending big-city cops TV series – avoiding facile vulgarity, and showy, cheap shots – ultimately it may remain too close to the main-line TV fare, too safe, too neat. It lacks some of the ragged edges of the more intensely pure direct cinema.

That is the limitation. But it is a limitation that in no way invalidates the real measure of excellence enjoyed by both Don Haldane films.

●

Claude Jutra directed both the other films, **Dreamspeaker** and **Ada.** And here we are faced with quite another phenomenon.

Quite unlike Haldane, for a number of years now, Jutra – along with Don Shebib, and, briefly, William Fruett – has enjoyed a very rare privilege in Canadian film circles: he has been overpraised, or rather given too dominant a position, by a certain Toronto critical establishment (those weekend and biweekly magazines, CBC reports, and so on). For all his real contributions to Canadian cinema, Jutra in no way overshadows some of his top colleagues on the Quebecois scene, where the feeling, in so far as it is negative, is that Jutra too often succumbs to his own artistic showiness, whether it be manifested in the esthetic elephantiasis of **Kamouraska** or the pyrotechnics that mar, say, parts of **Mon Oncle Antoine** and all of **Wow.**

Paradoxically enough, the discipline and limitations imposed by the journalistic films serve Jutra beautifully. As never before, Jutra, in his two *For the Record* films, exercises artistic control, subjecting himself to a benign kind of austerity. The austerity is benign precisely because it counteracts a sensibility prone to certain excesses, which have their roots, perhaps, in Jutra's obsessive themes. If Haldane's films incarnate the liberal spirit, Jutra's incarnate a kind of adolescent, anarchistic romanticism. Jutra's characters are forever the outsiders, and they are doomed. Society and, worse still, life itself have given them a very raw deal indeed. Inevitably, the Jutra film screams out in anger that things are the way they are.

The nightmare world of **Ada** could easily verge off into something unbearably *grand guignol.* But it does not, thanks to the journalistic style – or something vaguely related to it – that the format, and Jutra, adhere to. Similarly, the very touching and poetic **Dreamspeaker** remains within range; it does not become its own esthetic trip.

Both are essentially personal films, limited to the concerns which inform all of Jutra's films. But Jutra none the less touches all of us with his humanity, his pity for those on the fringe, or on the edge. The self-indulgence, esthetic or otherwise, that weakened earlier films is absent. But the Jutra poetry remains, more discreet, and hence purer.

●

A series such as *For the Record,* put out by a public corporation such as the CBC, has its own inevitable pitfalls. An obvious one: if the repertorial concern unearths issues that are too hot, the corporation will chicken out. "It's awfully good to examine things in Canada, *provided that ...*"

I have not seen **The Tar Sands,** the Peter Pearson contribution that was to close the series. But from what one hears and reads, it may well have been cast into the nether regions by overzealous CBC caution.

Too bad. Pearson has done brilliant work in his CBC films – **Best Damn Fiddler From Calabogie to Kaladar, The Insurance Man from Ingersoll,** and **Kathy Karuks is a Grizzly Bear,** to name but three. He seems eminently suited to the genre, much happier with it, so far, than with his "real genuine feature movies".

The one good aspect to the mini-scandal may be that when **The Tar Sands** is finally allowed into Canadian living rooms, more people will know about it and be titillated into watching it.

●

That is a good note to end thse comments on. That more people may know about this series, and give themselves a chance to enjoy these "journalistic films"...

In the long run, these movies may well point the way to viable feature filmmaking in Canada on a more ambitious scale. One thing for sure – in quality, merit, and solid entertainment values, they are lightyears ahead of most of the mindless schlock presently being pushed upon the Canadian public. □

Someday Soon by Don Haldane

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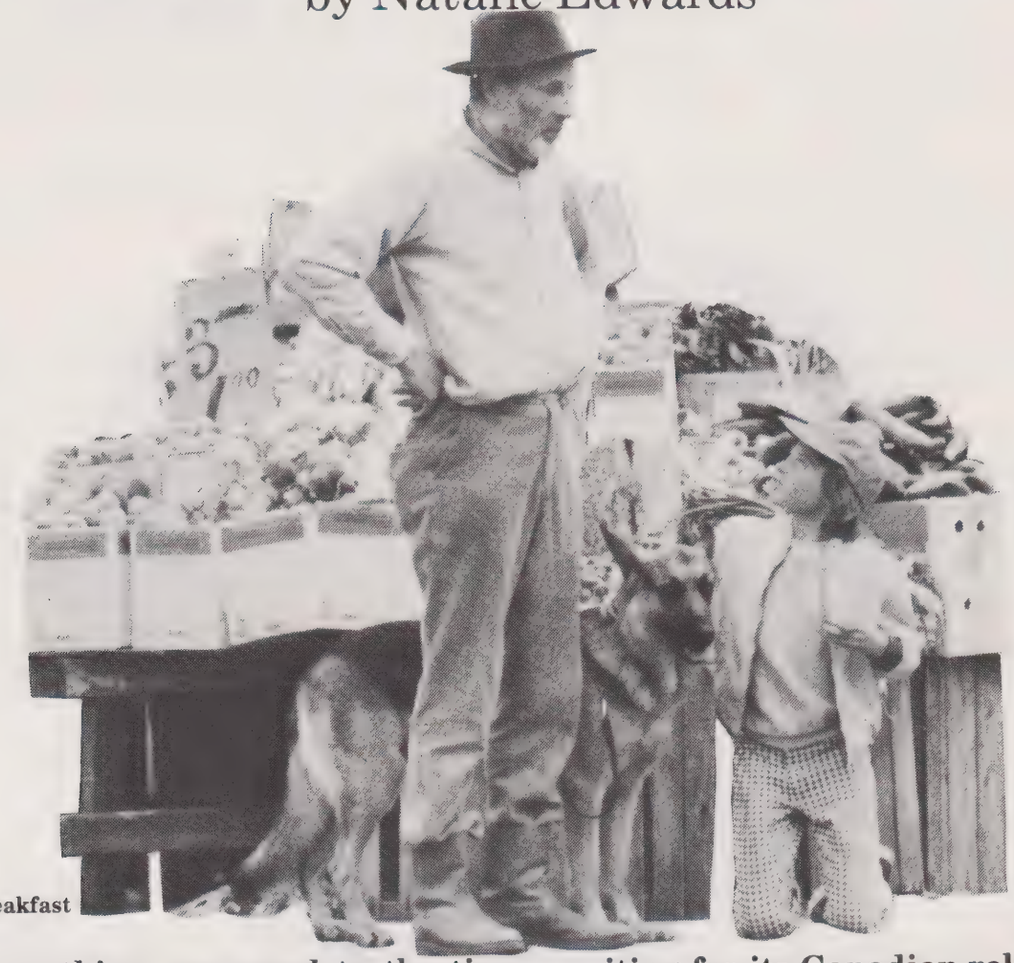
hoping deadly is sweeter

by Natalie Edwards



A street scene from **Lions for Breakfast**

Jet lag is nothing compared to the time lapse some Canadian producers experience between the moment they shoot a film and the date of its release. *A Sweeter Song,* produced by Tony Kramreither, was screened at Cannes in 1976 and has been waiting for its Canadian release ever since. Meanwhile, both the director, Alan Eastman, and the star, Susan Petrie, have moved on to Hollywood, and Kramreither himself has another feature under his belt and several more on the drawing table.

Typically, producer Tony Kramreither (**Lions for Breakfast, A Sweeter Song**) had to begin his career all over again when he emigrated to Canada at 30 in 1956. Despite a background in theatre, film and TV (directing and producing over 50 TV dramas and documentaries, acting on stage) the Vienna-born Kramreither took a variety of jobs here before he began to work as a performer in TV series like **RCMP, Scarlett Hill, Wojek, Quentin Durgens, M.P.** and **Adventures in Rainbow Country.**

After gaining experience, if not acclaim, with two quickly forgotten films, **Change of Mind** and **The Reincarnate,** he became a producer with a Canadian-Rumanian co-production (the first) of **Silent Friends,** shot in Rumania.

"It's very strange, working in Rumania," he says. "The crew was excellent. The cameraman did wonderful things with a hand-held camera. But the difficulties were with paperwork. Half an hour to get a hammer, signing things. One day I had to use a gun (called a pushka), for which many

Natalie Edwards is a freelance Toronto film critic who contributes regularly to the Toronto Calendar *and has worked as associate editor of* Cinema Canada. *She is a member of the executive board of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers.*

papers had to be filled out. And during the river scene the boat went over and I went into the beautiful blue-dirty-filthy Danube, and swam as quickly as I could to get out. They were all yelling 'Pushka, pushka!' because you get into terrific trouble if you should keep a gun. They dove for about two hours trying to retrieve it.

"But what an industry there! They are the same as us, about 20 million people. And they make 20 to 30 features a year. French is their second language, German their third. Many people study English rather than Russian in school for their free language. I spoke to them in German and it worked well."

Kramreither is a big energetic man, enthusiastic to a fault, willing, co-operative, and as opinionated as a Dutchman. He has an old-fashioned excitable disposition – the kind that plans great ventures, survives big disappointments, and doesn't acknowledge defeat. Who else would tackle an all-Canadian film with all-Canadian jokes and an all-Canadian cast? On $400,000?

Jim Henshaw, one of the stars of **Lions for Breakfast,** wrote the script for **A Sweeter Song** and reworked it with director Allan Eastman. It's Eastman's first, and there are ways that is obvious, and Henshaw, as the male lead, has not quite mastered comic timing. Yet the film has a lot of attractive features, not the least of which is a bright performance by Susan Petrie. Kramreither agrees that sharper cutting might tighten up the film, which lags a little self-indulgently at the moment.

But **A Sweeter Song** is not his first all-Canadian venture. In 1974 he produced **Lions for Breakfast,** for which he claims the original distribution was a dismal failure, almost ruining the film's chances. He bought back control and is now releasing the film through EPOH (Bob Hope's company) in the U.S., and Ambassador in Canada. EPOH has made 45 prints and set 400 playing dates in the U.S. for **Lions** already.

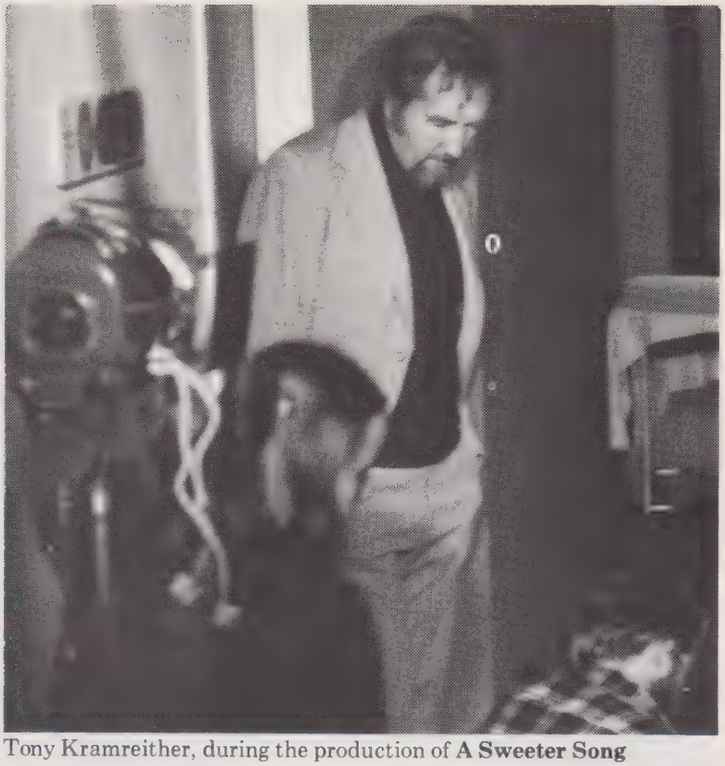
Kramreither is convinced financing and sales, promotion and distribution, are the keys to Canadian success. Co-productions may be one answer. A TV series he produced on the lives and works of four Nobel Prize winners involved co-producing with Radio Sweden, Office de Radio-diffusion Television Française, Bavaria-West Germany and EVS Australia. Shown on the CBC in 1975, the program not only introduced Kramreither to "four of the most wonderful human beings I know" but strengthened his resolve to always work with material he could control – after a confrontation over leaving in anti-U.S. remarks by Linus Pauling, as well as a controversial statement about deaths caused by aspirin.

How does a man with six children and a big house manage? "Well, I don't cry about the Canadian film industry," exclaims Kramreither. "And I do other things to make a living. I can act, direct; I have a big advantage. And a producer does give himself a salary – not large so far but when I get into big-budget films, I'll do all right."

Bob Brooks, csc, and the small crew he always uses give him their very best, he feels, and when he is really big-time, they'll be glad they worked for him, he says, "because I won't forget them." He has three speeches for cast and crew when he begins a picture: "First, I tell them that working together will be like being on a holiday. In the middle of the film I encourage them and ask them to give me their best. And at the end I thank them. That's all."

As a producer, he says, his three main jobs are raising the money, making various post-production decisions concerning the film, and attending to sales.

He has finished shooting **Deadly Harvest** (also with Ambassador). Written by Martin Lager (who wrote **Lions**), the principal photography was finished in December. "Consider



Tony Kramreither, during the production of **A Sweeter Song**

weather conditions..." Kramreither begins, and proceeds to relate what sounds like a disaster plot based on food shortages so bad they affect even Canada. He tones down the catastrophic aspect, however, and insists the story is kept on "a human scale; little people, a small community...". But a big budget. And good distribution. The film at least is not intended as a disaster.

Other irons in the fire include a personal work on **Alexander Solzhenitsyn – The Conscience of Russia in Exile,** a one-hour documentary special which is a labor of love. "I was offered $100,000 backing to make this an anti-communist film," he says, "but I refused it. It is my intention to simply show the man and his achievement."

From John Craig's novel **In Council Rooms Apart** he is fashioning a film about "the biggest conspiracy ever," concerning the power of the 10 families or so that control our world through armaments and secret agreements."

"How is it, do you suppose," he says, "that both the Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth sailed through the Second World War without getting bombed or sunk, though they travelled alone? I have even met the U-boat commander who was ordered at the last minute, while waiting for one of them, to go 100 miles away to sink some small ship. Think of that." Shooting is planned for February/March 1977 with a $1.2 million budget.

And he's planning more co-productions with the Americans following the success of **Giant Spider Invasion,** recently released here. Asked about a rumored move south, he replies vehemently, "I'll be their Canadian producer, but I'll *never* move there. I like to visit though. If I moved anywhere, I'd like to live in Munich..."

Other future plans?

"I'd like to make a film about the greatest Canadian – Dr. Banting. The story of his life is fascinating. He had to share the Nobel Prize with McLeod, but he knew Best deserved recognition, and worked hard to see he got it. Have you seen the mock-up lab he worked in at the Ontario Science Centre? Horrible circumstances, to make such an important contribution. But because he is a Canadian you cannot get the money. But I'll make that film. I guarantee." □

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ACTRA

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THE CBC "BRINGING CANADIANS TOGETHER"?

The matter of utmost concern just now to ACTRA and its members is undoubtedly the CBC.

ACTRA has been attempting to make it plain that the current work permit issue is just one symptom of an arrogant, autocratic attitude which has developed among CBC personnel at many levels, which predicates against the type of programming the CBC should be producing, in terms of its mandate from Parliament, in terms of the creative resources available in this country – in terms of plain commonsense.

This same unresponsive attitude recently precipitated what the newspapers have described as a "revolution" among the CBC Radio Arts producers.

The CBC's promotional tag is "Bringing Canadians Together". But in fact what the CBC is bringing us is based on the lowest common denominator philosophy of most commercial broadcasters, is aimed principally at audiences well-served by other channels, and is far from being distinctively Canadian.

The situation on the CBC/ACTRA Agreements has been fully reported in special bulletins to all members. Briefly:

- the impasse in negotiations on the Television Performer Agreement has not been resolved, despite efforts on ACTRA's part
- the CBC has taken the position that it will not implement the Writers' Agreement and the Radio Performer Agreement, both ratified by the ACTRA members, until negotiation and ratification of the Television Performer Agreement have been completed
- the relationship between ACTRA members, performers and writers, and the CBC is therefore governed, until further notice, by the 1973/76 Agreements.

N.B. This is the position in the second week of February. If there is any change a bulletin will go out to members immediately.

BCFIA

British Columbia Film Industries Association

916 Davie Street, Vancouver, B.C.
(604) 684-4712

Things in British Columbia are certainly coming together. The Social Credit government in the person of Mrs. Grace McCarthy has responded to much pressure from the British Columbia Film Industry Association and has informed BCFIA that plans are in the works for the appointment of a Film Development Officer. The position will be advertised in BC and hopefully it will not take long to fill. FIA has asked Mrs. McCarthy to consult with them in drawing up the requirements for the position. Hopefully this job creation will make the difference in securing the future of British Columbia as a film centre.

Since 1970 BC has been the centre of a number of major motion picture productions. **Carnal Knowledge** was shot here as was **McCabe and Mrs. Miller, Russian Roulette, Journey Into Fear, Christina, The Supreme Kid,** TV movies **Sunshine, Hey, I'm Alive, Revenge for a Rape** and several others. Because of a lack of sophisticated selling techniques the province has had to depend on producers "discovering" it over and over. We have in BC excellent film technicians in IATSE Local 891, whose members have resumés stretching back for years over many major productions not only in Canada but in Britain and the United States. The talent pool of ACTRA and Equity is vast and experienced. With the exception of Toronto and Montreal our talent forms the largest group in Canada. In the Directors Guild we have many experienced assistant directors, production assistants and in Bob Gray and Bob Linnell two of the best production managers in the country.

We have always had the benefit in British Columbia of being a great place to live, and we therefore have a disproportionate number of talented people for our size. Many people have come here from other film centres throughout the world, for a variety of reasons. Some have come to be away from the ulcer cycle that we have all experienced in other places, some wanted to raise families – all want to work and have been willing to create their own job market.

This is not a dropout situation. We have in the province a group of dedicated film professionals who want to bring business to BC. Within the BCFIA we have close to 800 members, all of whom spend a good part of their working lives creating the very job market to which they belong. Thank God for Mrs. McCarthy. This is the first measure of support we have received from any provincial government in BC.

CSC

Canadian Society of Cinematographers

22 Front St. West
Toronto, Ontario

The Ottawa chapter of the Canadian Society of Cinematographers has been reactivated.

Guests at the meetings so far have included Herb Lightman from the American Society of Cinematographers, and Budge Crawley who screened **Man Who Skied Down Everest.** Michel Brault screened one of his first films and, more recently, Ian Matheson, C.S.C., screened **Melancholy Occasion,** a CBC-Ottawa drama production. Also, Braun Electric has given a Arri-SR demonstration.

All correspondence should be addressed to Roland Pirker, president, 1391 Cavendish Road, Ottawa, K1H 6B8, (613) 521-3603.

David McNicoll

TECH NEWS

by Rodger J. Ross

THE FILM-VIDEO DEBATE

The November issue of *American Cinematographer* has an article on this topic, made up of excerpts from a speech by Lars Swanberg at a conference of the Nordic Film and Television Union in Copenhagen. Mr. Swanberg, who is head of the department of technical information and development at the Swedish Film Institute, lashed out at those who are making an issue of film vs. video. He claims that television broadcasters have set out to prove, at any cost, that film is inferior, even to the extent of using half-truths and manipulated statistics. This is happening especially in ENG (electronic news-gathering) applications.

But there is another, more favorable side to this film/video controversy – the use of electronic equipment to produce videotape recordings for purposes other than broadcasting. According to Mr. Swanberg, over 13,000 audiovisual program titles were produced in the USA in the year 1973 – more than the three television networks, NBC, CBS and ABC, together broadcast in prime time during that year. He then goes on to define "video" as a medium and a new industry based on non-broadcast television. He claims in support a statement by Lars Edling, video expert at the University of Lund, that the formal difference between television and video is that television involves broadcasting while video means playback from a video recorder connected to a TV monitor.

There is a need for some term or designation that would describe non-broadcast program production on videotape, but "video" seems a poor choice. Video is already defined in dictionaries as an adjective, of or pertaining to television, especially to the picture portion of the program, and as a noun, television. *The Alphabetical Guide to Motion Picture, Television and Videotape Production,* published by McGraw-Hill, defines video as a term pertaining to the bandwidth and spectrum position of the signal which results from television scanning and is used to reproduce a picture. (My own definition of video is a means for producing pictures by an electrical scanning process instead of optically, as with film.)

The term or designation selected should not be so obviously exclusive as to still further aggravate the confrontation between television and film. After all, programs being made on videotape do not have to originate always with electronic cameras. Film can – and very often does – contribute significantly to program production on videotape. It is so easy to make transfers from film to videotape that quite often the use of a film camera for making the original recordings is preferable to the much more costly and inconvenient electronic camera and its videotape recorder.

Future Prospects for Film

Too often filmmakers look on television as an enemy, committed to depriving them of their livelihood. As the portability and versatility of electronic equipment is improved, television makes ever greater inroads into areas previously the exclusive preserve of film. The latest development in this direction is the widespread acceptance by broadcasters of ENG, displacing film cameras in news gathering and related applications.

Of course, as Mr. Swanberg points out in his lecture, large numbers of instructional, educational, promotional, industrial, scientific, advertising and amateur films will continue to be produced, and television broadcasters may even "rediscover" film when the current overenthusiasm with ENG subsides. A much more realistic attitude towards television would be to take advantage of the opportunities that electronic systems offer to expand film use. By far the most profitable avenue of exploitation is in the production of programs on videotape using film as the original recording medium.

The film camera is a near-ideal picture recording device. It is light in weight, relatively simple in construction, and can be taken anywhere as hand baggage. In reality, a film camera is a combination camera-recorder, with the recording material in a magazine attached to the camera. Compare this with portable electronic equipment consisting of a camera, control unit, videotape recorder and power supply.

A film camera is a mechanical-optical device that needs relatively little maintenance, and no preliminary set-up adjustments before recording can commence. The recording material – film – has built-in response characteristics, yielding perfectly sharp images in color when exposed to light through the lens. Accompanying sound can be recorded on the picture film (single system) or separately on magnetic tape (double system) without an electrical connection between the camera and sound recorder. The capital cost of the film camera and its accessories is only a fraction of the cost of electronic equipment giving pictures with comparable quality.

Film-to-Videotape Transfers

An even more important advantage in making original recordings on film is that afterwards either film prints or transfers to videotape can be made from the originals. A common practice in film production is to edit the originals into A and B rolls so that, by printing first the A roll, then the B roll, from common start marks, effects such as fades and mixes, titles and credits can be added. A similar procedure can be followed in making transfers to videotape, except that these and other effects can be put in electronically. At the same time, the picture color balance can be shifted in any desired direction by adjusting the video camera controls.

Several different methods can be used to transfer film to videotape. The most common method, employed

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Long-time Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of the CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, Television Film Engineering *and* Color Film for Color Television *and has also won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal, awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.*

by broadcasters, is to project the film into a television camera with equipment known as telecine. A telecine chain consists usually of two film projectors and a slide projector, optically multiplexed into the camera. Alternatively, the film pictures can be projected onto a small white screen and picked up with a television studio camera set up in front of the screen. The television camera scans the projected images, producing video signals that can be electronically processed in a switcher-mixer and special effects unit, and then recorded with a videotape machine. A camera control unit displays the camera output as electronically generated pictures, as well as the video waveforms from which the pictures are produced. Adjustments can be made in the camera control unit while the film is running to compensate for films that are under- or overexposed, as well as to alter the color balance of the pictures. This procedure offers more scope and flexibility than the familiar film timing procedure, with the added advantage that the television monitor on which the pictures appear shows the effects of the adjustments as they are being made.

Videotape Production Facilities

When a film camera is used to make the original recordings the much more costly and cumbersome electronic equipment needed to make the transfers and assemble the finished productions on videotape can be set up in a comfortable air-conditioned studio back at home base. With an arrangement of this kind there is no longer a need for compromises between portability of the equipment and the level of picture quality that can be achieved in the videotape recordings. Instead, the compromise only needs to be made between the cost of the equipment and the level of picture quality that the end use demands. Often this resolves into a question of the kind of equipment that can be purchased with the funds available.

The professional quadruplex 2-inch videotape recorder gives the best quality, but the cost is quite high. Many different makes and models of helical scan recorders taking various widths of tape are available also, at much lower cost, and these machines are used extensively in applications where lower standards of performance can be tolerated. Television cameras, too, are available in a great range of makes, models and price ranges. It is very important to carefully assess the technical requirements of a film transfer and production assembly operation before investing in equipment.

There are no standards as yet for helical scan videotape recording. If the objective is to distribute productions on videotape, the best plan would be to make production masters on the highest-quality recorder that can be obtained, and then make dubs as required from the master onto the various tape formats that the distribution arrangements call for.

EQUIPMENT NEWS

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BOOK REVIEWS

Caligari's Cabinet and Other Grand Illusions
A History of Film Design,
by Léon Barsacq,
Revised and edited by Elliott Stein; 264 pp.; New York Graphic Society – Boston; $21.50.

Caligari's Cabinet and Other Grand Illusions, by Léon Barsacq, is a blast in film design. It picks you up and heaves you through 75 years of film history, covering everyone and everything from the Lumière Brothers to Stanley Kubrick in 264 pages, one-third of which is devoted to a fascinating series of black and white photos collected from all over the world, and not often seen combined with such concise chronological detailing.

In a forward by René Clair, he notes that "a photograph is not reality but a reproduction of reality that we take for real because of a convention we are so used to that we no longer recognize the deception involved." The height of the complex art of set design is when the style of the set relates so closely to that of the real work that the audience pays no special attention to it. And so the old adage, "The most successful set is the least noticeable one."

The subtle and hidden art of set design and art direction is often so taken for granted that brilliant movies come and go and audiences never even take notice. Heroes are made of actors, directors, writers, etc., while the entire art department is shelved and aired on a yearly basis for token Academy Awards.

I am convinced that the average audience doesn't care who makes the movies, and that credits are completely wasted with the exception of filmmakers and buffs. Most viewers utilize the beginning credits for the candy counter, and the last ones in a stampede for the parking lot. (There are also the moviehouses that use credits as an opportunity to show off their expensive screen draperies.)

Erla Lank-Gliserman is co-owner of Costumes Unlimited, a costume workshop in Montreal, and has worked on many commercials and features as art director or costume designer. Lately, she has worked on both ***Rabid*** *and* ***The Disappearance.***

The sets of French designer Léon Barsacq (**Les enfants de paradis,** 1945, **Gates of Paris,** 1957, etc.) were so completely accepted by the audience and absorbed by the films that he enjoyed this kind of anonymous success. Drawing on a career rich in experience and memories, he has assembled the first complete survey of the history and technology of film design ever written. The revision and editing by Elliott Stein is so true to Barsacq's original intent that it is often impossible to tell when one left off and the other took over.

The first one-third of the book is devoted to a brief history of films. It takes the reader and viewer step by step from country to country giving a concise calendar of film events, always keeping in mind the advancement and temporary setbacks of design.

Praise is showered on Mélies' painted sets; designers Hunte, Kettelhut and Vollbrecht for their work with Fritz Lang on **Metropolis;** Perry Ferguson's contribution to Orson Welles' **Citizen Kane;** production designs of Hein Heckroth for **The Red Shoes;** Cedric Gibbons for his 32 years as supervisory art director at MGM; W.C. Menzies whose contribution to **Gone With the Wind** made it the classic it is today; to art director John Hoesli, and the 35 designers and draftsmen who perfected Stanley Kubrick's **2001; A Space Odyssey,** just to mention a few.

Later chapters give a basic analysis of the role, conception, technique and execution of sets. It gives pointers on how to approach researching, lighting and special effects. It actually tells how to attack a set design and physically build it. It even contains a basic formula for costing sets, furnishings and properties. All this is accompanied by black and white photos that correlate sets with examples of particular styles of film.

Film is such a tight little island that it often forgets that some of its greatest talent was conceived and born in the theatre, coming over to films for a number of practical reasons, one being money. Barsacq makes you doubly aware that theatres were the source of some of the world's top designers.

As though all this was not enough, this is followed by a comprehensive muster of film designers and their credits by Elliott Stein; the Academy Awards for Art Direction and Set Design from 1927 to 1975; a selected bibliography of works on art direction and an index that looks like the Who's Who of film design for the past 75 years.

It is a monster of a book and a must for serious filmmakers, students and buffs.

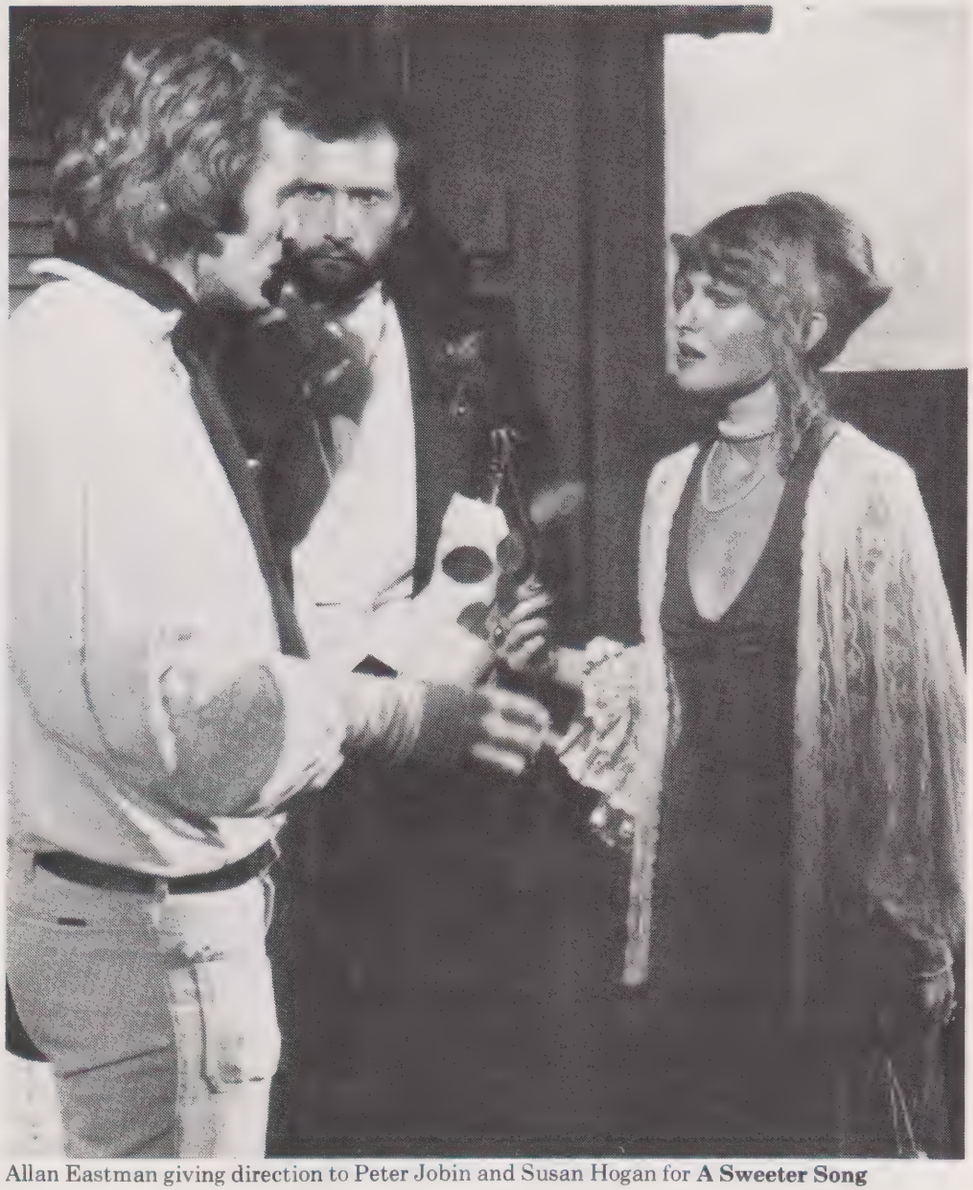
Erla Lank-Gliserman

FILM REVIEWS

Allan Eastman's

A Sweeter Song

d. Allan Eastman, **asst. d.** John Ryan (2nd Steve Bradden), **sc.** Jim Henshaw, **ph.** Robert Brooks, csc, **lighting,** Tommy Wright, **asst. ph.** Dennis Rindsem, **ed.** William Gray, **sd.** Brian Day, **boom man** Steve Switzer, **sd. rec.** Brian Day, **set dec.** Barbara Waltman, **wardrobe** Lynn MacKay, **l.p.** Jim Henshaw, Susan Petrie, Peter Jobin, Susan Hugan, David Bolt, Allan Migicovsky, **exec. p.** Anthony Kramreither, **p.** John C. Hunter, **assoc. p.** Samuel C. Jephcott, **p. manager** Samuel C. Jephcott, **p.c.** Labyrinth-Burg, 1976, **Color,** 1976.



Allan Eastman giving direction to Peter Jobin and Susan Hogan for **A Sweeter Song**

Canadians, we are told, are not funny people. We don't like to laugh at ourselves, and, on top of it all, we don't create comedy. Of course, that's not true at all. For one thing, some brilliant comedy is produced in Canada; for instance on radio's *Inside from the Outside,* or Don Harron's dirty puns or Mordechai Richler's writing. For another thing, most of the great comedy produced by Canadians is in American media, because they're all in Hollywood. It is a difficult type of creation, though, and the perils are many awaiting those who attempt it. **A Sweeter Song** is a Canadian feature film comedy – one of the few – and where it succeeds is the most unlikely places. Where it falters is unfortunately predictable.

Sex does happen in Canada. Sex can be funny in Canada. Accepting this premise is a hard one for Canadian filmmakers, and embellishing it to include an examination of male-female relations in our time through comedy is usually avoided. Allan Eastman and Jim Henshaw's script takes a square look at young people, their ideal mates, and their sexual and social follies, and while the result is not profound or extremely sophisticated overall, it is done in a refreshing manner and there are some very good moments.

A news photographer, Jim Henshaw, is hung up on his best friend's wife. She discovers her spouse dallying with another and leaves him; unfortunately she chooses our hero's gay neighbor to move in with, instead of our hero.

Meanwhile our heroine, who works at the same newspaper as Henshaw, decides that Henshaw is for her. Susan Petrie proves herself to be one of the best actresses in Canadian film with this role. Unlike her past typecasting as the frigid teenage tease, she finds things in this character that aren't in the script, and it's one of the few times we can see a contemporary young woman on the screen, especially considering the void that now exists in roles for women. She allows the script to overwhelm her at points – too much relish in her dirty lines that are grafted onto the dialogue, and tossing away a term such as "meaningful relationship" by laughing at its wrenching commonness as she proclaims it in her character – but in her crucial moments she's completely believable, and carries her low comedy scenes with great timing.

The other acting is strong too. Alan Migicovsky, Susan Hogan, and Peter Jobin round out the quintet with enthusiasm even though their characters are far from full. Henshaw has too much mooning after Hogan and looking nonplussed and confused to give

Film Credit Abbreviations: d.: Director. asst. d.: Assistant Director. sc.: Script. adapt.: Adaptation. dial.: Dialogue. ph.: Photography. sp. ph. eff.: Special Photographic Effects. ed.: Editor. sup. ed.: Supervising Editor. sd.: Sound. sd. ed.: Sound Editor. sd. rec.: Sound Recording. p. des.: Production Designer. a.d.: Art Director. set dec.: Set Decorator. m.: Music. m.d.: Music Director. cost.: Costumes. choreo.: Choreography. l.p.: Leading Players. exec. p.: Executive Producer. p.: Producer. assoc. p.: Associate Producer. p. sup.: Production Supervisor. p. man.: Production Manager. p.c.: Production Company. col.: Colour Process. dist.: Distributors. narr.: Narration.

any real breadth to his character, but the fault lies more in the script. Playing an accident-prone individual offers too much predictability in a comedy, but Henshaw handles his overabundant pratfalls with skill, and elicits the required laughs from any audience.

The story rounds itself out as it should, with everyone living happily ever after. It all happens against straightforward sets and lighting, with Bob Brooks' cinematography displaying just enough brightness to support the tone.

The perils, on the other hand, are obvious and too often not avoided. The tendencies to be self-indulgent and sophomoric are too easily embraced in the film, mostly in the script and especially in the glee with all the visual low comedy pratfalls and a couple of scenes that exist for their own sakes, rather than the story's: a gangster take-off, for instance. The object here was not satire, but affection for a type. The creators seem to be too far removed to place the type in the story, though, with any credibility. In another case, however, the desire to satirize the Canada Manpower experience works exceptionally well. Henshaw's character would get into such a situation and act in the situation in just the way he does, and at the same time the whole experience, to everyone who's been through it, is a highly effective comedic extension of the horror of the real thing.

The cutting of the film, by William Gray and Eastman, is very well done. It's apparent that in the script and in what was actually shot, there was a looseness that comedy can't tolerate. Now it's tight and moves right along, the camera angles are good, and the pacing keeps the audience interested. **A Sweeter Song** is Eastman's first feature, and a CFDC low-budget effort; it's to his credit that he's chosen such a difficult genre and brings most of it off.

For overall there is a freshness and likeability to the film that's a marketing plus. And it's one of the few times an audience is presented with an examination of young people's mating habits that is made by young people, rather than someone middle-aged who's trying to remember. There's no reverence in looking at it straight on instead of filtered through time, and that's an immediate plus for the film. A contemporary audience should react to it well, if it's marketed properly.

Stephen Chesley

Yvon Deschamps and Rita Lafontaine celebrate in **Le soleil se lève en retard**

André Brassard's

Le soleil se lève en retard

d: André Brassard, **asst. d.:** Jacques Méthé, **sc:** Michel Tremblay, **adapt:** André Brassard, **ph:** Alain Dostie, **ed:** André Corriveau, **sd:** Jacques Blain, **set dec:** Normand Sarrazin, **m:** Beau Dommage, **cost:** Louise Jobin, **l.p.:** Rita Lafontaine (Gisèle), Denise Filiatrault (Marguerite), Huguette Oligny (the mother), Yvon Deschamps (Jean Cusson), Paule Baillargeon (Ginette), Gilles Renaud (Yvon Thériault), **p:** Luc Lamy, **p.c.:** Les Productions Pierre Lamy Ltée, 1975, **col:** 35mm, **dist:** Les Films Mutuels, **running time:** 111 minutes.

Michel Tremblay and André Brassard, Quebec's best-known theatre duo, have combined to give Quebec one of the most promising films of recent years. **Le soleil se lève en retard** is a love story, done in halftones, which reflects well the mood in Quebec today.

Tremblay, the writer, and Brassard, who adapted the scenario and directed the film, have called it a film of reconciliation. The word is well chosen, and denotes an almost spiritual progression on their part. Whereas the plays which they have made and their first two films have been bitter, oppressive works, full of black humor and hopelessness, **Le soleil** is a tender film, full of promise.

The film is centered on Gisèle, admirably played by Rita Lafontaine. Her performance is responsible for the very great effectiveness of the film. She is perfect in her role of an office worker, just turned 30 and still looking for the love of her life. Both her family and the girls

at the office gang up on her and she turns, in trepidation, to a matrimonial agency.

The scenario would have given Tremblay and Brassard all the ammunition they needed to take potshots at small people in ridiculous situations. Yet here, the cynicism is gone; they are restrained and no one is made a fool. Eventually, Gisèle meets an almost painfully shy man and the two of them undergo the strained and tantalizing process of getting to know one another, building mutual respect and love from what appeared, at first view, an unpromising match indeed.

One can only thank the authors for giving us this version of love: for once, without glamor, without youth, without sensation. It is simply love as many have known it. Warm and, hopefully, long-lasting.

The film is full of extraneous elements which seem to have nothing to do with the story. Every now and then, Tremblay gives us a girl, wandering through the streets at night, looking for the man who stole her purse; or a disagreement between two deaf-mutes in the park; or a homosexual in the subway who asks Gisèle to marry him. For no reason at all, a family in mourning comes in to eat supper at a barbecued chicken place. In the context of the film, these episodes appear neither sinister nor tragic. They made me think of Hitchcock's appearances in his own films; a way for Tremblay and Brassard to remind us that this tender, sentimental film was still theirs, and that the strange bizarre world filled with their usual characters was not far away.

As a filmmaker, Brassard has made tremendous strides. His first feature, **Il était une fois dans l'est,** was rightly criticized for being filmed theatre. In this new film, the movement from scene to scene is effortless, the pacing carries one right along. Also, Brassard handles his actors well. The performances are superb. It's a pleasure to see Yvon Deschamps, best known for his stand-up comic monologues, as a shy, tongue-tied middle-aged man, falling in love awkwardly.

Certainly, **Le soleil** is a most pleasant film. Without violence or sex, it remains to be seen whether the public in Quebec will still appreciate such a muted and friendly portrait.

Connie Tadros

Ernest Borgnine tracks down his man in **Shoot**

Harvey Hart's

Shoot

d: Harvey Hart, **sc:** Dick Berg (from the novel by Douglas Fairbairn), **ph:** Zale Magder, **ed:** Ron Wisman and Peter Shatalow, **a.d.:** Earl Preston, **sd:** Paul Coombe and Karl Scherer, **m:** Doug Riley, **l.p.:** Cliff Robertson (Major Rex Jeanette), Ernest Borgnine (Lou), Henry Silva (Zeke), James Blendick (Pete), Larry Reynolds (Bob), Les Carlson (Jim), Helen Shaver (Paula), Gloria Carlin Chetwynd (Ellen), Kate Reid (Mrs. Graham), **p:** Harve Sherman, **exec. p:** Dick Berg, 1976, **color,** 35 mm, **running time:** 92 min., First Toronto showings, Nov. 26, 1976.

"Far-fetched made-in-Canada meller about rampaging gun freaks. Mild commercial potential."
VARIETY, movie reviews,
June 2, 1976.

Shoot – very well acted, niftily directed, sharply shot – is not the world's greatest picture, nor even Canada's, but I think it deserves better than that sour welcome from the leading trade paper. Commercially it may, perhaps, be proving mild, lacking the nastiness of **Death Weekend** (a film which I promise never to mention again) but in craftsmanlike and even meaningful terms it's by no means negligible. The story of a hunting party mysteriously menaced by rival hunters and becoming eager to return the compliment has overtones of relevance, even though films such as the Spanish **La Caza** (The Hunt) have explored similar territory already. The approach to a consideration of *macho* values under pressure is not especially subtle – except in one scene with a drunken widow, ferociously played by a feline Kate Reid – but then a jolly weekend spent shooting anything that moves may not itself harbor much subtlety.

Harvey Hart, with two recent features to his credit (in every sense), would seem to be a man well qualified, borrowing a phrase, to "interpret Canada to Canadians". Both **Shoot** and the attractive **Goldenrod** attest to a clear visual style and a sympathy with people, notwithstanding the thin representations of Canadian actors in notable roles. What Hart and his colleagues and his audiences badly need now are strong and viable scripts. Good literate dialogue has begun to return to American films, as witness **The Front** and **Network** (overrated though Chayevsky's work has been). Who can write it here and where will they find the chance? The present screenplay is not without merit but it misses definite, determined communication of its point of view. Hunters might have quite a jolly time watching **Shoot**, which is probably not what was intended.

Clive Denton

REVIEWS OF SHORT FILMS

Lies

d: Jonathon Reid and Peter Walsh, **ph:** Robert Fresco and Robert New, **ed:** Honor Griffith, **sd:** Ed Jeffers, **sd. re-rec.:** Ian Jacobson, **m:** John Mills-Cockell, **exec. p.:** Wayne Arron, **p:** Jonathon Reid and Peter Walsh, **assoc. p.:** Angelo Stea and Peter Lauterman, **p.c.:** Capital Arts Productions Ltd., 1976, **col:** 16mm., **running time:** 57 minutes, **dist:** Rhodes International.

Beneath the veneer of any film lies the unpolished reality of the film's coming into being. It is the reality in which the cinematic illusion is nurtured. **Lies** is an ambitious attempt to penetrate and explore such a reality.

Lies, directed by Peter Walsh and Jonathan Reid, is a behind-the-scenes examination of the filming of **Lies My Father Told Me,** directed by Jan Kadar. A film about the making of a film, **Lies** may be viewed as a biographical study of a film's birth. In **Lies,** we see a film in its embryonic stages of development, as yet unrefined by the editing process. **Lies** illuminates the intricacies and ironies that complicate a film production. Its startling impact resides in its portrayal of how reality is acted upon, manipulated, and interpreted.

Lies assumes the task of discovering the real people who live in the world behind the screen. Perhaps most lucidly captured is the oppressive tension that charges the set. In the patriarchal figure of Jan Kadar, we encounter the catalyzing agent not only of **Lies My Father Told Me,** but of **Lies** as well. A man of scathing intensity, Kadar moves through **Lies** like a cry of frustration. The enormity of his presence, at times, is such that one forgets that he is not directing **Lies** as well. The camera, though drifting to scrutinize other issues, seems to be drawn magnetically back to Kadar. Whether this is attributable to a bias on Walsh's part, or simply to the fact that Kadar dominates the set, cannot be determined. Nevertheless, **Lies** provides us with an enlightening glimpse into the influence that Kadar exerts in developing the filmic illusion. Hovering over the set nervously, he guides the film into existence and nudges the actors and actresses into their roles. He is the nucleus of activity, around which the crew, actors, and actresses revolve – at one point, prior to the shooting of a scene, Jeffrey Linus, who plays the little boy, asks if he may stay with Kadar. Everyone on the set must attune themselves to Kadar's erratic moods. He explodes (sometimes for no apparent reason), then utilizes the tension he has caused to channel the energies of the actors and actresses. The impression that we receive is that the actors and actresses are almost totally in the hands of Kadar. He is, incontestably, the star of **Lies.**

All dressed up for **Lies**

Additionally, **Lies** gives insight into the creative process of acting. We watch as real people wrestle with the nuances of their roles, trying on various dramatic accoutrement in order to achieve the desired effect of credibility. In the shooting of the breakfast scene, for example, both Birman, who plays the father, and Lightstone, who plays the mother, experiment with various rearrangements of lines and intonations. It is a tricky scene, occurring after the death of the grandfather and the subsequent disappearance of the son. In berating the mother for her concern, it is essential that Birman does not overdo his harshness. Similarly, Lightstone must not exaggerate her anxiety into hysteria. Together, along with Kadar, they must find a viable balance of emotion (unfortunately, we are never shown the resolution). In probing the evolution of a character and of a mood, **Lies** fathoms the polarity existing between the real person and the role, between reality and illusion. For example, in preparing for the scene in which the father tells the little boy of his grandfather's death, Birman and Kadar must first impress upon Linus the import of the grandfather's death. Similarly, in rehearsing for the scene when the father spanks the little boy in rage, it must be explained to Linus that he must pretend that he is really being hurt.

Lies is somewhat circumvented, in its effort to expose the behind-the-scenes actualities of filmmaking, by the self-consciousness of the actors and actresses and Kadar as well. Walsh could not masquerade about the set in anonymity and everyone on the set, as a result, is highly aware that they are being filmed. The actors and actresses steal surreptitious glances at the camera and, in their interviews, seem primarily concerned with justifying the way they handle their roles. Linus, who is nauseatingly endearing ("Any kid my age could do what I do"), is blatantly aware of Walsh's camera and is constantly seeking its attention. One wonders whether the actors and actresses are really unmasking or whether they are simply exchanging the paraphernalia and props of one role for those of another. Kadar, too, is painfully conscious of the fact that he is being filmed. He is naturally embarrassed and apologetic about his eruptions and one cannot help but speculate that he is monitoring his actions and attempting to tame his acerbic tongue. Walsh provides the actors, actresses, and Kadar with a publicity platform and they capitalize on the opportunity for self-aggrandizement.

Moreover, it is highly possible that the very presence of Walsh and his crew served to aggravate the emotional abrasiveness on the set. Walsh's camera is an interloper; the people on the set are both intimidated and teased by the invasion. As a result, it appears that they censor and

modify their actions accordingly. Spontaneity and impulsiveness are sacrificed for the sake of control.

The integrity of any documentary rests on its objectivity. Pure objectivity is, of course, an unattainable ideal, due to technical limitations (i.e., the camera's view can never be totally omniscient) and to the filmmaker's attitudes, which inevitably sneak into filming. Yet it is the fundamental task of the documentary filmmaker to protect his work from the intrusion of distorting subjectivity. This is accomplished through distancing. In **Lies,** Walsh distances himself, but he does more than dispassionately report. Without editorializing. Walsh interprets and focuses, imposing significance on the material he is examining. Unfortunately, in clarifying some aspects of the making of a film (i.e. the development of character), he clouds others. We are given only a fragmented representation of what is happening. For example, at one point, Kadar is shown discussing the effects of a particular camera angle. Unfortunately, our view is obscured and we cannot see the technical set-up that is being explained. The film is misleading for we only receive haphazard glimpses into the filmmaking process. Complexities are glossed over, appearances are manipulated, and the reality behind the screen is only further mystified, becoming an extension of the Hollywood myth. **Lies** presents the reality of filmmaking within the Hollywood tradition – as a pressure-cooker reality of frayed tempers that snap too quickly and lines that come too slowly, of too many cigarettes and not enough sleep, of conflicting wills and technical distractions. Though Walsh decontextualizes the actualities of filmmaking, he also recontextualizes these actualities, utilizing Hollywood techniques. The filming is tight and dextrous, and, at times, rather cliché. For example, the freeze-frame shot near the end of the film, of Kadar and Linus strolling off together, is a worn tactic, reminiscent of Hollywood sentimentality. Also, tacked on to the end of the film like an afterthought, is the interview with Kadar, wherein he states, "Everything that is beautiful is destroyed someday." The interview only confuses and distracts; what do such platitudes referring to the transitoriness of life have to do with making a film? It is such sugar-coating that serves to parody the reality of filmmaking. Perhaps it is because **Lies** is polished with Hollywood slickness, that the reality of filmmaking is eclipsed, rather than uncovered.

Thus, we are faced with the nagging suspicion that perhaps **Lies** is not the unsheathing of an illusion at all, but rather the perpetuation of yet another illusion. Walsh, not content with mere surfaces but concerned with subterfuges, was aware of his predicament. His recognition of the dichotomy of reality as inextricably bound to illusion, and of the inherent manipulations in filmmaking, is evident in the very title.

Susan MacLean

Home Free

d: Rebecca Yates, Glen Salzman, **sc:** Marilyn Becker, **ph:** Mark Irwin, **ed:** Rebecca Yates, Glen Salzman, **sd:** Brian Day, **m:** Panorama Sound, **l.p.:** Karyn Robertson, Yuet Ngor Lau, Mai Lyn Quan, **p:** Rebecca Yates, Glen Salzman, **assoc. p.:** Rudy Buttignol, Peter Maynard, **p.c.:** Fruits and Roots, 1976, **col.:** 16 mm, **dist:** National Film Board, **running time:** 18 minutes.

Home Free is a film about multiculturalism. A hot topic, certainly, at the moment in Canada. A complex topic, too, that deals with a basic need in our society today, that of communication between the diverse peoples and cultures that live here. It seems, therefore, that the goal to achieve in presenting multiculturalism on the screen, in order to create that understanding needed, is simplicity. And **Home Free,** to its credit, operates on just those terms.

The film also offers a fresh approach to the problem, and in this small but effective twist lies the strength of the film. Usually we see, in such WASP-based efforts, a foreigner – usually a child – placed in an English home situation that is alien and frightening. Through such a film the foreigner learns the new ways and begins to feel acclimatized. In **Home Free** the roles are reversed: a young girl, fresh from the country (the ultimate symbol of Canadian roots), moves to the city, specifically Toronto's Kensington area, rich in peoples from everywhere, be it Portugal, Hungary, Italy or, in this case, the Far East.

Mai Lyn Quan in **Home Free**

Mark Irwin's cinematography and Brian Day's sound convey the sensual nature of such a community extremely well, especially since directors Yates and Salzman have taken advantage of the sights, sounds and smells of the market, where the young girl is confronted with the alien prescence, in this case a wonderfully mysterious, inscrutable Chinese laundry woman.

Since the film is told from the girl's point of view, she has to develop an understanding of the environment she will now live in. An opportunity occurs when a classmate invites her to a birthday party. Karyn's discomfort is allayed by the creativity in fashioning an original birthday card, and returns only when, at the party, she is forced to eat the strange food offered with chopsticks, and furthermore to do so under the gaze of the laundry woman, the matriarch of this naturalized family.

All of the Chinese family speaks perfect English. The kids play, laugh and tease each other in the same way as kids or adults anywhere, and, through the use of a game of hide and seek, Karyn learns to understand them and realize that she has been accepted by them; even the grandmother helps Karyn to get 'home free' in the game, and in the environment.

The film has already met with some success. Financed by the Ontario Ministry of Education (one of three projects funded out of 270 applications) and International Tele-Film Enterprises of Toronto, it has been accepted for distribution promotion by the NFB, mainly because the Board has nothing like it. ITF president Murray Sweigman is confident that he'll sell 100 prints in no time, and is backing up his faith in the project by spending money to highlight it in his distribution network.

The film deserves it.

Stephen Chesley

FILM REVIEWS

Lady From Montreal

d: Andrew Adams, **sc:** Andrew Adams, **ph:** John Bak, **ed:** Andrew Adams, **sd. rec.:** Roger Segalin, **m:** Chappell, **l.p.:** Claude Desroches, Vanessa Jensen, Lorna Pelkey, Hank Kruger, Chester Pelkey, Lizzie Fleck, Tim Higgins, Perry Socretis, David Kirk, Andrew Adams, **p:** Andrew Adams, **assoc. p.:** John Bak, John Westhauser, **p.c.:** Fecal Arts Production, 1974-76, **col:** 16 mm, **running time:** 24 minutes.

Movies made by film students in their graduating year usually serve two purposes. They sum up what the student has learned in the three or four years of his studies and they must present the student in a good light to prospective employers. It is too much to expect such a film to suggest as well that the filmmaker is developing a personal style or vision.

Andrew Adams' 1974 graduation film from Conestoga College in Kitchener, Ontario, called **Lady From Montreal,** has all the clumsy self-conciousness common to most student films but it contains enough unusual elements to raise it above the expected norm.

For one thing, it's an endearing film, whimsically fetching in a bumbling sort of way. But over and above the puerile humor lies a wryly viewed parody of gangster genre films. The plot is pure B-movie hokum: mysterious lady entices hard-boiled private eye to take up her case though he soon learns that nothing is as it seems.

But filmmaker Adams, who studied under Vaclav Taborski, isn't merely content with parody. He has set up this creaky mechanism expressly to pull the rug out from under his hero. Tough-talking bottom-pinching Sam Risk, it develops, has a strange dark secret and wherever he turns during his investigation, he meets characters who say they know what the secret is. Sam's complacent world reels under this knowledge which plunges him into a nightmare of uncertainty.

Sure, the parody is ladled on rather heavily and gaps in the plot are numerous, but this too serves to establish a strong sense of displacement, of illusive reality in which the hero must grope.

The director has used the relative inexperience of his actors to good advantage. Their uncertain movements and forced acting style enhance the unease we feel in exploring this world and make us more aware of the relentless movement towards Sam's final humiliation.

On a visual level, the film is remarkably effective. Adams and his cameraman John Bak have taken considerable pains to evoke the stifling underworld through which the hero moves. Harsh light rakes the strong expressionistic shadows that pervade the film and there is more than just a little **Touch of Evil** in the set design. Odd discordant sounds distort and intensify the mood while snappy editing by Adams, particularly in the boiler room sequence amid swirling jets of steam, whirls the viewer around in the hero's nightmarish perceptions.

Another delightful aspect of the film is the exacting way the crew has scavenged all manner of period props like old-style telephones, office furniture and cars and the skilful way they have photographed these props against a backdrop of suitable architectural styles. The lovely art deco stair railing in a hotel scene is almost a throwaway image since one catches only a glimpse; but knowing that it is there gives the films that much more credence and adds up to the look of a much more expensive film.

Lady From Montreal is orchestrated like a giddy, disturbing dream. You find yourself giggling uneasily at the constant barrage of dislocations. The film's texture is like trying to run through thick fog without knowing where you are. You share in the hero's isolation and increased alienation from reality while marvelling to yourself that a student film is doing this to you.

One grudgingly comes to the awareness that beneath to hokiness, the melodrama and the juvenile confession that climaxes the film, there is a tenderness and a formal structure that takes the isolation of the character beyond farce. At the end of the film we realize that superficial tackiness has clouded our vision of the character's obvious despair over his predicament. Here the interior energy of the film shines out in a touchingly understated denouement which offers us a glimpse into the beginnings of artistic style.

Günter Ott

CLASSIFIED

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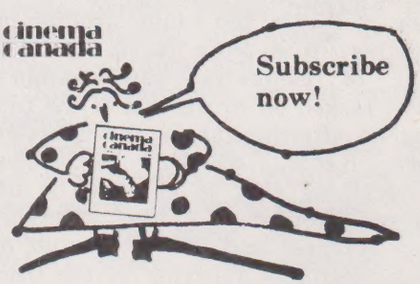

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